

HELPS IN
“Things concerning Himself.”

EDITED BY W. T. TURPIN.

“Christ is all.”—Col. iii. 11.

VOL. V.

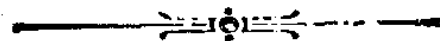
LONDON:
G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

1895.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
"Thou <i>Remainest</i> Thou art the <i>same</i> "	I
God's Threefold Testimony - - -	3
Forgiveness of Sins - - -	12
Soul-Winning - - -	27
The Person and Office of the Spirit.—No. I	29
Matthew xvi. 13-28 - - -	32
Mark vii. - - -	36
Having Christ - - -	55
The Person and Office of the Spirit.—No. II.	57
Mark viii.—Dalmanutha - - -	61
Sacraments - - -	80
Fragment - - -	82
"He is not Here" (Poetry) - - -	83
The Person and Office of the Spirit.—No. III.	85
Bethsaida - - -	89
Paul at Ephesus - - -	109
Himself Thine all (Poetry) - - -	112
The Person and Office of the Spirit.—No. IV.	113
"The Man Christ Jesus" - - -	117
"The Holy Mount" - - -	119
The Cancelled Bond (Poetry) - - -	139
The Person and Office of the Spirit.—No. V.	141
"As Poor yet making many Rich" - - -	144
"Bring him unto me" - - -	145
The Person and Office of the Spirit.—No. VI.	169
The Centre of all Christian Affections - - -	172
Association with a Divine Person - - -	176
"My Sheep . . . follow me" - - -	179
The Gift of Christ - - -	185
"Whom having not seen, ye love" - - -	189
The Doldrums - - -	193
Alone (Poetry) - - -	196
The Person and Office of the Spirit.—No. VII.	197
Mary Magdalene - - -	200

	PAGE
"The Reproach of Christ" and "The Reproach of Egypt" - - - - -	209
A Church without Pretension - - - - -	218
"Speak good of His Name" - - - - -	223
I shall not pass again this way (Poetry) - - - - -	224
"A Child is Born"—"The Mighty God"	
"Emmanuel" - - - - -	225
The Resurrection - - - - -	233
Dangers in a Day of Ruin - - - - -	237
A Church without Pretension - - - - -	245
"Nevertheless God" - - - - -	249
Songs in the Night (Poetry) - - - - -	251
"We beheld His Glory" - - - - -	253
Cherubim and Seraphim - - - - -	258
Two Circles of Divine Love - - - - -	262
"Lord, Teach us to Pray" - - - - -	269
Zion, the Mountain of my Holiness - - - - -	275
The <i>Cross</i> , The <i>Grave</i> and The <i>Glory</i> - - - - -	279
"His Word was with Power" - - - - -	281
The Thoughtfulness of Divine Love - - - - -	292
God's King - - - - -	302
The Precious Perfume - - - - -	305
<i>Kept</i> and <i>Led</i> (Poetry) - - - - -	308
Finally - - - - -	309
Life, Leading and Walk by the Spirit - - - - -	313
" <i>Stand Fast</i> ," " <i>Hold</i> ," " <i>Himself</i> " - - - - -	320
Service - - - - -	324
"The Gold Wire" - - - - -	329
"Through him that loved us" (Poetry) - - - - -	331



"Helps in Things concerning Himself."

**"THOU *REMAINEST* THOU
ART THE *SAME*."**

ANOTHER period of time is begun, and the things of the former year are passed away with it, men and things have faded from view, many of them to be forgotten, remembered no more. We enter upon an unknown future to-day, full of hopes to some, fears to others, uncertainty to all. When I say uncertainty, I mean only in respect of time and things on earth; thank God, all that is of real value is for the Christian "*sure and certain within the veil.*"

In the passage which supplies us with the two blessed presentations of Christ which head this page, we find the Spirit through the apostle contemplating the perishing, and the waxing old, and the changing, and the folding up of the **whole** of this material earth; but humbled as He might be, who became man, yet He was the Creator Himself, and His years could not fail.

Further, let us note the importance of the word rendered "Lord" in the quotation from Psalm cii. 25-27: it is the supreme and incommunicable name; it is *Jehovah* here, but is

2 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

translated "Lord" in the Septuagint. It has often been remarked that the name God may be used in a subordinate sense and applied to those who represent the authority of God, but the name of Jehovah is never thus used, it is His own blest name of covenant relationship, Himself the everlasting and immutable One.

Let us just for our comfort meditate on the precious contrast presented to us here, namely, the crumbling and perishable creation with the eternal Christ—Jehovah.

First, how blessed to know that He abides, He remains the same, when all else shall have both changed and passed away; the tendency with us is to look at material things as forming a solid resting-place for our hearts; it is amazing how substantial to us is the land of shadows, how we pursue them, though continually wearied and disappointed.

Secondly, observe that all these things shall not perish simply for want of abidingness in themselves, *but according to the will of Him* who created them, hence it is said, "As a covering shalt thou roll them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same"—that is, *the existing One*, who does not change—the word used for *remain* (διαμενῆς) means to abide through all changes.

May our hearts find their rest and repose in Him, may we be both won and satisfied by

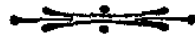
GOD'S THREEFOLD TESTIMONY.

3

Himself, so as to be both suitable to Him and to serve Him the little while we wait for Him.

“ And thus our bark moves onward,
O'er life's tempestuous sea,
While death's unerring hand
Is stamp'd on all we see ;
But faith has found a living One,
Where hope deceiveth not,
For life is hid with Jesus—
And Jesus changeth not.”

W. T. T.



GOD'S THREEFOLD TESTIMONY.

(I JOHN V. 6-13.)

IN this scripture we have set before us the great purpose and object of the incarnation of the Son of God, what characterised His coming, what He came in the power of, as we read : “ This is he that came *by water and blood*, Jesus the Christ.” No doubt there is an allusion here to that of which the writer of this scripture testifies in the nineteenth chapter of his gospel : “ But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs : but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.” He had come to die, “ He was made a little lower than the angels for [on account of] the suffering of death ” (Heb. ii. 9) ; and the water and the blood tell of what was effected by His death, what

4 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

His *death* had procured, for it was from the pierced side of *a dead Christ* that the blood and water flowed, namely, perfect purification for man (water), and perfect expiation for God (blood). They give the aspect of the work of Christ manward and Godward. Purification for man was not all that was needed, and hence, "not by water only, but by water and blood ;" God required expiation, the blood was for God's eye, He was the One who had been offended by sin, He was the One therefore to whom satisfaction for sin had to be made ; nay, more, whose glory had to be made good in respect of it. But there is purification for man, based upon expiation for God, and both the one and the other are *through death*, the death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is the glory of His Person that makes His death so efficacious. If any one does not confess Jesus Christ *come in flesh*, it is clear that he does not recognise the need of purification and expiation, or at least that death alone could procure them ; and it is equally true that such an one does not confess *Jesus* to be the Son of God, for Jesus was in flesh, and was put to death in flesh. He was a true man, had become man in order that He might die, and thus provide purification and expiation. But then His death was the end of man in the flesh before God, his *judicial ending*, and it is the proof that there is no

GOD'S THREEFOLD TESTIMONY.

5

life in man for God, *nothing* in him for God: it is the testimony to the universal ruin of the race of sinful and mortal man. Who can speak of there being any good in man, when the sinless Man, the Man to whom it was given to have life in Himself, died for him? "One died for all, *then all have died.*" (2 Cor. v. 14.) Death is upon all by the judgment of God, though all be not actually dead. Yes, the blood and the water which flowed from the pierced side of that sinless but dead Man are the passive testimony to the ruin, universal and irremediable, of the race of the first Adam. Each one of that race in the eye of God *is a dead man*. Jesus did not come as a moralist, as if man were capable of being recovered. Nicodemus might say, "Rabbi, we know that thou art come a teacher from God" (John iii. 2); he did not say, "Come *a Saviour* from God," for he did not recognise the ruin of man. The ministry of Jesus did not recover man, he was like "the deaf adder that stoppeth her ears; which will not listen to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely." (Ps. lviii. 4, 5.) As He Himself said, "We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced" (Matt. xi. 17); there was no response, and there was therefore nothing left but for man to be removed, being such as he is, from before the eye of God in judgment, in the Person of Jesus, made sin upon the cross. It

6 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

was *in death* that His service was effective, that the great purpose of His manifestation was accomplished, "Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin." (Chap. iii. 5.)

We know that the Son of God has come, that He came *in flesh*, that He came *by water and blood*, and the confession that Jesus is He is a characteristic of one who is a Christian. Alas! there are those in these days, as there were in the days of the apostles, who pretend to Christianity while they teach doctrines utterly subversive of the fundamental truths of Incarnation and Redemption. Hence the value of this epistle, and we do well that we insist on the tests which the apostle applies to such, whoever they may be. But where is Jesus now? Having accomplished the great purpose of His incarnation, having finished the work which the Father gave Him to do, He is as man with that Father in the new sphere and state for man to which resurrection leads, and from thence He has sent down the Holy Ghost to bear witness to the truth of His having arrived there. Yes; man, in the Person of Jesus glorified, *has arrived* at that blessedness purposed for man in Him or ever the world was created or sin and death had entered. The full truth as to that eternal life, "which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began," is now in full display in Him as man

GOD'S THREEFOLD TESTIMONY.

7

with the Father, the truth of it is in Jesus glorified, and "It is the Spirit which beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth." John could not bear this witness, he might bear witness to Him as here in humiliation, as one that had been with Him from the beginning—to the blood and the water which flowed from His pierced side as He hung in death upon the cross; but he could not bear witness to Him as in glory; for he, even as we are, was dependent for the knowledge of this upon the coming of the Holy Ghost, and the testimony of the Spirit, along with that of the water and the blood, is to the solemn yet blessed fact, that life, eternal life, is in *that Man, and in no other!* It is God's threefold witness, and the three agree in one, their testimony is one, the active testimony of the Spirit and the passive testimony of the water and the blood, negatively to the fact that there is no life in the first, the Adam man and positively to the fact that eternal life is in the Son of God, as Man in glory. Alas! how few there are that receive this testimony of God, how many there are seeking to subvert it while calling themselves Christians, while others are practically, if ignorantly, denying it by efforts to improve the man whom God has removed in judgment from before His eye by the cross. *That man* has gone *for God*, and there is no other way of purification for

8 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

us than in our acceptance of that fact, by the appropriation of Christ's death to ourselves, and by His death that man has gone *for us*; thus and thus only are we free of the flesh and all that flesh is; but while this deliverance is obtained by eating, once for all, of the flesh of the Son of man, and drinking, once for all, of His blood, yet our practical enjoyment of this liberty can only be maintained by our *continuous* eating and drinking of it. (See John vi. 53 and 54, 56.*) Not to receive this testimony is to make God a liar. How solemn thus to ignore the testimony of the Spirit and the testimony of the water and the blood.

How does the fact that we receive man's witness judge us, if we receive not God's witness who is greater? "He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself," for the Spirit which bears witness abides in such an one, and no one can reason him out of that, however simple he may be and unable to answer the subtle, unbelieving reasonings of man, for faith does not reason, it receives; faith is the reception of divine testimony, of what cannot

* Verse 53, *once for all*, "Unless ye shall have eaten the flesh of the Son of man and drunk his blood," &c. Verses 54, 56, *continuous*, "He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood has life eternal, and he that eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me," &c. See "New Man" by J. N. D., published by Geo. Morrish.)

GOD'S THREEFOLD TESTIMONY.

9

be known save by divine testimony. "He that does not believe God"—alas! what a testimony in itself to the state of man's heart that he should not believe Him who is infallible and cannot lie—"has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness which he has given concerning his Son." No, man will not receive the testimony of the Spirit and the water and the blood to the fact that he *is dead by sin*—has *no life in himself*, and that, being past improving, he has been judicially ended, and that life is in another Man, outside of this scene, and for him, if he will receive Him; but seeks to improve himself by one means or another, not owning that as a sinner the judgment of death is upon him, and that that sentence can only be righteously removed on the ground of expiation effected by the blood-shedding of the Son of God. But God's witness is that eternal life is His gift to all believers, and that this life is in His Son, not in themselves, but in Him; and therefore in order to possess this life He Himself must be possessed in whom the life is, for "He that has the Son has life, and he that has not the Son of God has not life."

As a solemn instance of the way in which God's threefold testimony is nullified and He made a liar, I would give an extract from a volume recently published, by the author of a well-known work, "The greatest thing in the

IO HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

world," and a Theological Professor ; the book I refer to is, "The Ascent of Man." "Up to this time no word has been spoken to reconcile Christianity with evolution, or evolution with Christianity. And why? Because the two are one. What is evolution? A method of creation. What is its object? To make more perfect living beings. What is Christianity? A method of creation. What is its object? To make more perfect living beings. Through what does evolution work? Through love. Evolution and Christianity have the same author, the same end, the same spirit." And what is evolution according to this Professor? That man sprang from a mollusk to a monkey, and from a monkey to what he now is ; that this process of *ascension* has already extended through countless ages, and that it will go on through ages yet to come until he arrives at, is "rounded off," into a something he knows not what! What folly, what darkness, yea, what wickedness, what a making of God a liar and of Jesus an imposter, and yet he has the audacity to say that Christianity and this system "are one"! Such is the human idea of "the ascension of man." What is the divine? That man, in the Person of Jesus raised from among the dead, has ascended up into glory, that eternal life is in Him and He is it ; a Man who is and who ever was perfectly to God's satisfaction, but now in a sphere and a

GOD'S THREEFOLD TESTIMONY.

11

condition perfectly answering to His thought and purpose for man before the world was. And He is the blessed Image, according to which it is the purpose of God to conform us, that He might be firstborn among many brethren. "We know that we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Yes; the believer can say, that is what "I shall arrive" at! We are *to ascend* as He did, caught up in clouds to meet Him in the air, and so to be for ever with the Lord. (See 1 Thess. iv. 15-18.) We participate with Him in all that is involved in that comprehensive expression, "eternal life." Yet we must remember that He is more than eternal life, He is also "*the true God*," and in this He is alone, for we do not participate in Deity.

The apostle wrote his epistle that we might know *consciously* that, as believing on the name of the Son of God, we have eternal life. But though eternal life, for us, belongs to heaven, as the sphere proper to it, it is not therefore to be wholly relegated to the future, for He was that Eternal Life which was with the Father, even when down here in humiliation, and what it was, as to privilege and moral character, is true in us *as Christians* in this world, even as it was true in Him (chap. ii. 8); but it is as practically answering to this that we have *the consciousness that it is ours*.

T. H.

FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

FORGIVENESS of sins is an elementary christian truth, but a very essential one, for no other part of the truth can be really apprehended till this is known in the soul. There are five different forms of forgiveness spoken of in the New Testament, namely :

Forgiveness of sins by God to the sinner who believes, which is eternal forgiveness, and knows no change, and so cannot be lost.

Forgiveness of sins by the Father to the saint who has failed in walk, and lost communion ; this forgiveness may need repeating.

Forgiveness of sins by God in government to the one who may be under His chastening hand for careless walk.

Forgiveness of sins by the assembly to the one who has trespassed against the assembly.

Forgiveness of sins by an individual to the one who has trespassed against that individual.

Let us consider these forms of forgiveness in the above order, so as to get a clear view of the subject, and thus able to help others.

FORGIVENESS BY GOD.

When any one has for the first time really believed the scripture, that says, " It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment " (Heb. ix. 27), that one seeks to know the

FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

13

way of escape, and the gospel is then looked at as *a reality* and not as a fable.

God's judgment clearly means that He takes account of things according to His estimate of them, so that they must be settled either now in *the day of grace*, or by-and-by in *the day of judgment*. How can they be settled now? There is forgiveness. What is forgiveness? Free discharge from legal obligations. The creditor has no more claim, as such, over the debtor.

Every man has become a debtor to God, and remains so till forgiven. Those who are forgiven are freed from the judgment their debts brought them under; they are fully at rest about their sins through God's forgiveness, which is given on the ground of the finished work of Christ on the cross, "Who suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." It is a great matter with any person when scripture speaks to the soul as *the voice of God*, there will then be a turning to *scripture*, to hear what *God says*, and the refusal to hear any other voice; such as the voice of personal experience, or feelings of the heart, or traditions of men: nothing will be listened to, but that which helps to the understanding of *scripture*. Faith quotes, "Let God be true, but every man a liar." (Rom. iii. 4.) If scripture plainly states that the blood of Christ is sufficient for God's righteous requirements, and the believing sinner's

14 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

need ; then the one who believes that, has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

If believers have any doubts about their forgiveness, they are detained or kept back from enjoying their full portion in Christ. The Holy Spirit has been sent from heaven to lead saints into all truth, and unfold the riches of the gospel to them. God says of all believers, "their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." (Heb. x. 17), and therefore there is no more offering for sin needed, because the sins have *gone*. Sins were very offensive to God, but they have been judicially settled on the cross, so that they cannot be revived, they have gone and gone for ever. Until saints are settled in their souls as to this matter, they cannot make any real progress in the truth, neither can they be any real testimony to those who surround them in daily life, or if parents they cannot properly teach their children the gospel.

Redemption is now "according to the riches of his grace." The word *riches* gives the idea of resources ; for instance, if a man builds a grand house which attracts attention, naturally people think he has great riches ; but if this house is entirely destroyed by fire, and he immediately begins another on a much larger scale, this would shew out his resources more than if the first had remained standing. In the Old Testament we see how God set up the Jewish system,

FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

15

and when that had totally failed, as seen in the rejection of Messiah, He brought out the present dispensation, which is by far the most wonderful of all dispensations. So it is "according to the riches of his grace." How assuring this is to the heart of the believer, who at the most has but a feeble apprehension of the love of God. Where is there room for doubt? Can we doubt Christ's blood? or God's grace? or the truth of scripture? Surely the heart would reply, I could not doubt these realities. Then what is doubted? Self, feelings, opinions of men; yes, doubt everything that changes, but rest assuredly on *Him* who changes not, and on *that* which changes not, namely, *Christ* and *His finished work*, with the precious testimony of the word of God to *both*.

There are many persons who love the Lord, and yet are not in their knowledge beyond converted Jews of the old dispensation. They know not the liberty of the gospel; they think their sins were settled up to a certain date (as in the Jewish system), and constantly need a further settlement. But "Christ died for our sins," not a part of them: and really the blood was shed before any persons now living were born, so that their sins were all future when Christ died. If he died for our sins it must have been all our sins, that is, the sins of our life-time, and the God who could see them, although we were not born, laid them on Jesus, and the scripture, which is

16 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

God's voice to us, tells us the sins have gone from before God *in the death of Jesus*, and gone from our consciences *when we believe*.

There can be no *second application* of the blood of Christ to the believer ; if there was, it would be saying the first was no better than the blood of the Old Testament sacrifices, which needed repeating because of their ineffectual character. When Jesus on the cross cried, "It is finished," *outside* the city of Jerusalem, God rent the veil which was *inside* the temple in Jerusalem, as His immediate answer to that cry, and to shew His satisfaction in that perfect, finished work. The resurrection and ascension of Christ were further witnesses to God's thoughts of *Him* and *His work*. Surely believers should say, Amen, if God is satisfied, we are, too.

Thus set at liberty by the work of Jesus they can, as led by the Holy Spirit, enter into the proper privileges of God's children. The conditions of christian blessings are on the principle of grace on God's side, and on the principle of faith on the receiver's side. "Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. ii. 9.) The believer receives God's testimony concerning His Son, and comes into the blessing that testimony speaks of.

Let us consider the saint's

FORGIVENESS BY THE FATHER.

FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

17

The word Father implies a relationship already formed, and in scripture all believers since Christ died and rose again are looked at as children of God. (Gal. iii. 26.) Carefulness of walk we are exhorted to, so that we should not sin, as we read, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father." (1 John ii. 1.) Here we see both the exhortation *not to sin*, and the remedy *if we do*. Sin is not only wrong acts which fellowmen can take notice of, but the working of self-will. Adam did his own will and ate of the tree of which God had said he should not eat. Christ pleased not Himself, but as He said, "I come to do thy will, O God." (Heb. x. 9.) We are exhorted to walk in Christ's steps, and not in Adam's. When Christ's yoke is on believers, they walk as He walked, in obedience to the word of God, and then enjoy communion with the Father and His Son, and with fellow-believers who are also walking in the same steps.

All real communion ceases when the natural will works, and this absence of communion continues till repentance and confession bring the wanderer back to consistent *christian walk*, and its companion *christian communion*. The work of the Advocate with the Father, and the work of the Spirit in the wanderer produce repentance and confession, as we read, "If we

18 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 9.) This is how the believer gets restored to the point of his departure. Days, weeks, months, or even years may elapse between the time of his sinning and the time of his restoration. During this time he may continue in sin; or he might become active in christian work, as preaching, visiting, Sunday-school work, and many other things, and yet all the while away from God in the secret of the soul. When this is the case the conscience gets harder and farther from God. Chastisement may have to do its work, for God never forsakes His people, but blesses and chastens them as He sees good.

When the restoration takes place the person is restored to the place of departure, and the time thus lost in his history is never regained. What a serious matter it is for believers to wander.

We are not looking at how a sinner can be accepted with God, but how a saint can be restored to communion with the Father. The sinner's sins having once been settled, that question can never be opened again; while the believer's communion is an open question, and remains open, as long as he remains in this world.

How assuring to know that every need has been provided for, and not one thing can happen

FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

19

that has not been thought of by our God. What a God is ours! May we know how to walk so carefully that *we sin not*; but if we sin, may we equally well know the divine remedy, in the Advocate with the Father.

Let us pass on to

GOVERNMENTAL FORGIVENESS.

While the world goes on apparently its own course, yet God holds the reins of its government, and will only allow things to happen which are consistent with His final purposes. The Old Testament is full of records of how God acts behind the scenes, and makes things that happen serve His will. Man may be led by Satan, and allowed to do many wicked things, and God may seem to take no notice of them, but scripture assures us all is known to Him. A sparrow does not fall without His notice. He does not hinder the sparrow falling, but He notices it. Man in his wickedness might crucify God's Son, and He allow it, but He knew how to turn that wicked act into the greatest blessing for mankind. If God governs the world, He also governs His saints, although seen in a different way. Governmental chastening requires governmental forgiveness. The chastening of believers may take the form of bodily suffering, and two epistles speak of such cases, namely, James and John.

20 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

In James v. 14-16 we read: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." Here we get the case of one who is under chastisement, and it may be for some particular sin or sins, and unable to obtain relief himself, he calls for the elders of the church. In the days of the apostles there were no separations amongst the saints. The Christians all met together, and there were officially appointed elders. Therefore the passage says, "*the* elders of *the* church." Now separations have taken place, where is *the* church, which contains all the saints in the town? and next, where is there any scriptural authority for persons now to appoint elders? Alas! the church, as to its outward constitution, is in ruins, and therefore there could not be men with any scriptural claim to such a title. If we cannot call *the* elders of *the* church, yet there may still be "the prayer of faith," and that will save the sick, that is, he would be saved from his affliction; and if he had committed sins for which he was being chastened, they would be governmentally forgiven him. The apostle John contemplates what is still more serious, namely,

a sin committed by a believer, for which intelligent saints could not ask for governmental forgiveness, as it would be more for God's glory that such an one should be removed out of the place of testimony. "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, ~~he~~ shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death." (1 John v. 16.) Thus far, John seems to be on the same lines as James, although he does not mention either church or elders; and only speaks of *one* person praying, and getting the person under chastening restored who was about to die. But the verse goes on to say, "There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he should pray for it." (1 John v. 16.) Here we see there is to be intelligence in the saints as to what would be consistent with the government of God.

Some case might be so serious that the person has no claim on the prayers of the saints for recovery, and they judge he had better be removed to heaven out of the scene where he has so dishonoured the name of the Lord. We have already seen that every true believer is fitted for the paradise of God through Christ's finished work, and *nothing can change* that; but we are now speaking of God's ways of dealing with His people on earth, and in His government they may die before their time.

Here are two occasions of saints dying, *one*,

22 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

when their particular service is done (see Acts xx. 24 and 2 Timothy iv. 7); the *other*, when their work is done so badly, the Lord will not allow them to remain on earth any longer. (See 1 Cor. xi. 30.) When everything in the assembly of God was in vigour and order, the government of God was more clearly seen than at the present time; but it is as sure as ever it was, for we read: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Gal. vi. 7, 8.) Some seeds grow and ripen quicker than others, but whatever is sown must come up.

Some persons are never governmentally forgiven, but have to bear the consequences of their sin to the grave, as Jacob and David had to do. This in no wise affects eternal forgiveness, which relates to *heaven*; what we are considering relates to *earth*.

Jacob sinned and sowed deception, when as a young man he deceived his father, Isaac; he reaped the same, when as an old man he was for years deceived by his own sons concerning Joseph.

David sinned in the matter of Bathsheba, and he reaped accordingly, the sword never departed from his house. As regards his communion, his

FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

23

sin was forgiven on confession (see Ps. xxxii.); but as regards the government of God, the chastisement continued. Let saints be watchful and sow to the Spirit, and remember that the judgment seat of Christ is the place of reward. We now pass on to

ASSEMBLY FORGIVENESS.

This refers only to sins of either doctrine or practice, which, while continued in, exclude the person from the company and privileges of the saints who are gathered to the holy name of Jesus. The christian assembly took the place of God's centre on earth, when Israel was cast off at their final rejection of Christ.

As we read: "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." (John xx. 23.) This commission was given to this new company in view of other persons coming into contact with them, as either admitting them to, or refusing them the privileges of God's assembly on earth. While Israel was owned of God they were commanded to exclude every one that was unclean. (See Num. v. 1-4.)

We find in 1 Corinthians v. how this instruction of John xx. was acted on. One, who was partaking of the privileges of the assembly, had grievously sinned, and when Paul wrote his first letter he pointed out that they had trifled with

24 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

the sin which was in their midst, and therefore only one way was open for them to get rid of the evil and scandal : " Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." (1 Cor. v. 13.)

In putting the person away the sin was retained on him by the assembly when gathered together. They had to act, in putting the evil from out of their company, in obedience to the apostle's word, which was the commandment of the Lord.

In 2 Corinthians ii. 10, the same apostle exhorts the same assembly to forgive this offender his sin, and to receive him back into their midst so that he being restored might enjoy the privileges of the assembly again.

It was evident that the man had repented and confessed to the Father, and in that sense was forgiven ; but he nevertheless needed the forgiveness of the assembly. In the present ruined state of things no company can claim to be *the* assembly of God ; but if saints are gathered on the ground of the assembly, they can act in obedience to God's word. To continue in fellowship with an assembly where there is *known* and *unjudged evil*, would but prove indifference of heart to Christ and His interests.

INDIVIDUAL FORGIVENESS.

FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

25

This refers to some matter of unhappiness existing between individuals, and requiring forgiveness from the injured person. We read, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee ; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way ; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (Matt. v. 23, 24.) This scripture shews that God takes notice of trespass against a brother, and it does not say confess to God, and then all will be right, but go and be reconciled to thy *brother first*, and then offer to God praise, thanksgiving, or any other sacrifice.

Again we read, "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him ; and if he repent, forgive him." (Luke xvii. 3.) Here the exhortation is not to the one who has offended (like Matt. v.), but to the one who has been offended. There is to be a readiness to forgive when the person confesses. These words were spoken during our Lord's life, before He died and rose again ; but the light of the full gospel only adds weight to this part of our subject, so we read, "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another." (Eph. iv. 32.)

These passages clearly show what an important place individual forgiveness of sins holds in God's sight.

The lack of apprehending this is one reason

26 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

why saints are so hindered in receiving further light and blessing. They should be prepared to forgive when trespassed against, or to confess if they have trespassed. How unforgiven sins often separate saints and hinder fellowship, to their loss and shame.

No doubt the enemy will raise difficulties, especially in regard to *assembly* and *individual* forgiveness ; but difficulties never hinder faith, they should only make us more earnest in seeking to remove every obstacle to the righteous settlement of sins, in whatever way they may exist. Until they are forgiven they remain unforgiven. A forgiven person is at liberty, his heart does not condemn him, he has confidence before his God and Father, before the assembly of gathered saints, and before his individual brethren.

What a real thing forgiveness is, and how careful we should be lest any one of these five forms should be lacking.

Unforgiven sin has a very hardening effect on the conscience, because there is a lack of practical righteousness, this gives the enemy further occasion, and the believer is brought into further bondage. Often when persons are in this sort of bondage they try by efforts of service to get free ; but activity of service, to cover up unforgiven sin, is most injurious to the soul. Confession alone frees, because through that

alone is there any forgiveness and liberty of heart, which is of the Holy Spirit.

It is most important to distinguish between *assembly* and *individual* forgiveness. Much trouble has arisen through mixing these two things together, for very often the person who sins against the assembly does also against individuals in it.

Only the offended party can forgive. The assembly cannot forgive sins against an individual, neither can an individual forgive sins against an assembly.

May we hold forgiveness as a most essential part of christian truth, and not only enjoy it ourselves, but be able to lead others into it, that they may with us be able to serve the Lord, His people, and His cause with gladness of heart till He comes.

G. W. GY.

SOUL-WINNING.

"WHAT we want to see in all God's children is that earnest love for souls, that keenness for soul-winning, that intense love which makes them do anything rather than miss a single soul; that earnestness which makes you say, 'I do not care one atom for my reputation so long as I can get down and grasp that soul.' But you know, *souls refuse to be grasped by*

28 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

unloving and untender hands. This is where the love of the Spirit is so important in all God's workers. People must not be looked down upon from a pedestal. No; we must get right down to their level, and not only understand their difficulties so far as we can, but get lower than they are, and see if we cannot grasp them with a loving, tender hand. No one cares to go to an untender physician. We would prefer to go to a physician who will be gentle and loving and kind towards our defect, and who will tell us how he can put it right. Oh that among Christians—and I daresay you and I have often come across it—there should be that lack of tenderness! Those are the Christians whom God has often to crush, perhaps by some heavy sorrow or by some awful failure in their life or in their service. God puts His hand upon them, not in order that He may cause them to despair, but to break into them that His love may break into them, and that thereby they may be made vessels really meet for His use."

—*Extracted.*

THE PERSON AND OFFICES OF THE SPIRIT.

I DESIRE simply to bring before you the scripture unfoldings as to the Person of God the Holy Ghost. The subject is of all importance, not only because our God and Father has been pleased to reveal it to us in scripture, but also because the presence in person of the Comforter on earth constitutes the essential difference of the present christian state; it is true it is not the *foundation* of it, but the power and presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, as the result of the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ and His exaltation to the right hand of God, is the distinguishing *characteristic of Christianity*.

I would at this time confine myself to the great fact of the *Personality* of the Spirit as we have it revealed to us in scripture.

It is very comforting to the heart to know that while on the whole page, as it were, of scripture, His divine Person is unfolded more or less, He is brought before us more vividly in His Personality, as soon as the blessed Lord announces to His disciples His approaching departure out of this world to the Father.

What tenderness of the heart of Christ comes before us in this! He knew what a *wrench* His departure would be to their poor sorrow-filled

30 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

hearts, He knew what a *blank* His absence would create. He was about to leave them *in Person*, another Comforter, the blessed Paraclete (*παράκλητος*), or, as some have called Him, *Advocatus*, that is, one “called in,” was to be here *in Person*. Oh how tender of the Lord all this, as He was about to leave them in Person: a Person then was to come and *abide with them for ever*.

This is the more striking as we remember that in the early chapters of John, the blessed Spirit is presented to us rather as *Power* than in *Personality*. We know, thank God, *He* is both.

But further, in order that we may have the fact of His divine Personality more impressed upon us, I would observe how that throughout those precious chapters of John xiv., xv., xvi., *the language* in which the blessed Spirit *revealed* the mind of God, and *inspired* as well the writers to convey it, leaves no doubt whatever as to the *Personality* of the Comforter, for we have the masculine, such as *εκείνος*, that is, that Person; *αυτός*, that is, He Himself, used, when speaking of the Spirit: it is then Him, as has been very truly said, “As the living and conscious exerciser of true personal will and love, as truly and fully as the first ‘Paraclete,’ the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. (1 John ii. 1.)”

Now it is very blessed to observe that this new *personal power*, this divine Person, God

the Holy Ghost, is spoken of as "*Power from on high*" (see Luke xxiv. 49, and compare with it Eph. iv. 8 and Ps. lxxviii. 18); this *heavenly endowment* they were to receive consequent upon the ascension and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. And, moreover, note they were to be *clothed* with it, for that is the force of the word in the original (*ενδυσθησθε*), they were to have put upon them the garment of heavenly power, heavenly endowment! How precious to dwell on this, and what light it sheds on His own gracious words, "It is *expedient* for you that I go away." Further, note that in the sense of *power* we are *unclothed* until we receive the heavenly gift—God the Holy Ghost—and He alone is power. May we rejoice evermore in this heavenly Comforter and power.

But again let me remark, that this new power was also to be the fulfilment of the promise of the Father in three ways, namely :—

1st. In vivid contrast with law and Jewish blessing.

2nd. As setting forth the new order of power connected with the characteristic name of Christianity, namely, *Father*.

3rd. As having been given to Christ and received by Him from the Father *for others*; it was but suitable that He the second Man in His place of exaltation, having revealed the Father, should receive Him, the Spirit, for others, and as soon as the Spirit had been given, and sent down from

32 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Him in glory, this explanation is thus given, "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he (Jesus) hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." Acts ii. 33.

Let us then dwell much on the blessed fact of there being *in us* and *with us* a blessed divine Person, God the Holy Ghost, He and He alone could be the solace for the wrench and the filler of the blank caused by the departure and absence of our Lord Jesus Christ; He and He alone could supply the comfort for their sorrow, sustaining their faith in the One now to be *unseen*, and as well testifying of the loved absent One to their hearts. May we know this gracious ministry of this personal Comforter more and more.

W. T. T.

Condensed Notes of an Address, No. 1.

MATTHEW XVI. 13-28.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—I venture to send a few disconnected notes taken many years ago at a lecture by J. N. D. on Matthew xvi. 13-28. As they are disconnected and imperfect I must, of course, be responsible for them in case I have missed the teacher's thoughts anywhere. I send them as I find them, in an old note book, the immense interest of the subject impelling.

E. L. B.

Milan, November 30th, 1894.

In this passage we find Christ rejected and a revelation of a higher glory than that of Messiah as an earthly king. I must own His rejection if I wish to understand this better glory (see vers. 22, 23 where Peter wishes to set aside the Lord's rejection, because his flesh was unjudged).

All is founded on Christ having been crucified and raised. On the other side of the cross we have Christ glorified in heaven, and this is the starting-point whether for the foundation of the church or for our own blessing. He does not say here that He is the Christ merely, but more—the Son of the living God. Then He says, "I will build." Rejected as Christ, He had come in *life*, and in His death glorified God in the cross. The work was perfectly done, and its acceptance proved. God anticipated the day of judgment in the cross, by giving His Son to be made sin, so the question has been completely settled before the day of judgment arrives. The curse of God was borne, and the power of Satan has been overcome. Christ was heard from the horns of the unicorns, when His work was finished; the old state of things has been completely judged, and now there is a new creation.

The second Man stands alone acceptable to God; and we who are in Him are reconciled to God in a world which is not reconciled.

34 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

This may help us to understand the place into which the church is brought.

Now we find ourselves living in a time, when the truth about the church has been lost ; and people have a form of godliness, whilst they deny its power. God has foreseen all the evil of the last days, and the perilous times that should come, and has given us this resource—His word. "From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures," &c. (2 Tim. iii.)

Paul laid the foundation as a wise master-builder, but then responsibility came in as to those who should build after. Wood, hay, and stubble has been built in, and all that is false will be judged. Thus if people trust to the "church" which God is about to judge, they will be judged with that "church."

Christ builds the true church after He had accomplished the work of redemption. He builds as One who has the title to build.

Compare 1 Peter ii. 4, 5, "To whom coming as living stones, ye are built," &c., and Ephesians ii. 20.

In 1 Corinthians iii. it is different ; God has put into the hands of man the responsibility of building, and this has failed like everything else. People say that man has done no harm in introducing wood, hay, and stubble into the building ; but God calls us to hear what the Spirit says to the churches, and we have this history in the

seven churches in Revelation ii., iii., where Christ *judges all* the evil in Christendom.

There are two distinct characters of the church of God.

One aspect is that of the body ; the other that of the house.

As to the body, there can be no unreal member in it. We are all (true believers) united to Christ by one Spirit, and to one another.

The house gives a very different aspect ; it is the place where God dwells, and it does not cease to be the house because evil has come in, and wood, hay, and stubble have been introduced. The evil will be judged (see Rom. xi. where professing Gentiles shall be judged as the Jews were). The faithful will be called to heaven, and the apostasy will come in Christendom, after the church is taken away. The evil has already made great progress ; compare the church in Acts ii., iv. with the present state of things. If a Chinese came to England, what would he think of Christianity?

There is a new creation which brings us into a new place. No doubt we find ourselves in a very peculiar position, for our bodies still belong to the old creation. Christ bore all our guilt connected with the old creation ; and there is a Man in heaven to whom we are to be like. The only perfection set before us is conformity to Christ in glory, and we shall never be satisfied till we

36 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

have attained that glory. He that hath this hope in Him, purifieth Himself as He is pure.

J. N. D.,
Notes of a Lecture.



MARK VII.

THERE are two great subjects in this chapter, and I do not think it is amiss to divide it under these two great heads; that is to say, we have everything upon man's side *exposed*, and everything on God's side in goodness and grace and kindness *manifested*. I think this chapter will bear division into these two parts, the entire exposing of all on man's side, and the manifesting in grace and kindness by our Lord Jesus Christ of all on God's side.

Let us look at the first division, the opening out and exposing of all that was connected with man. It is very solemn to see that it is not here man in what I might call his worst condition. When God is pleased to let in His light in scripture upon the state and condition in which man is by nature before Him, He takes up (and I think you will find it, not in one part of scripture only, but all through) what we might call the best kind of humanity, not the worst kind; He lets His light in upon that which might be considered best in man, to shew what was really there, even when there were external advantages

which He Himself was pleased to confer. And when I say the best kind of humanity, I mean what the Jew was. I think this will be found set forth in other parts of scripture in other connections: for instance, all through the Gospel of John we see what was old and what was connected with the Jew contrasted with that which is new and that which has come in our Lord Jesus Christ. The Jew is in every case taken up in that way as the great illustration and instance of mankind in his most favoured circumstances and condition.

Now let us look at how it stands before us in this chapter. First of all, we have depicted in a very solemn way the terribly low and degraded condition in which the Jew was found. The people had sunk down to this, that religion with them consisted in hardly more than the lowest conceivable external washing of pots and cups and brazen pans, and so forth. It had come to the most degraded and lowest *form of ritual*; that is the way the chapter opens. And I think it is not going too far to say that in proportion to the excess of the external is the diminishing of the internal; that where there is great attention to what is outside, there is but little thought of what is within. We see that all around us at the present moment, and that is what meets us in the very first instance here. There was great thought for what was external, the washing of

38 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

hands, and so forth, what is called in the Epistle to the Galatians, "beggarly elements," and in the degradation to which they had fallen, that is what their life of religion consisted in.

But along with that, we find here that there was a system of religious fraud, it cannot be called anything else, built up upon the abuse of what was of God in the ritual of old—that is to say, the consecration of property, for that is the meaning of the word "Corban" here. "Ye say if a man shall say to his father or mother, Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; making the word of God of none effect through your tradition." Now the meaning of it was simply this, a man was enabled, by this huge system of religious fraud, to so devote his property apparently to the service of God, under certain limitations, that he himself could avail himself of it whenever he pleased, but it was put out of his power to devote that property for the advantage and help of his poor relations. He, although he had consecrated his property in that way, was none the poorer for that consecration; all he had to say was "Corban," when it was a question of his fulfilling the filial relationships of life to his father and mother, when it was a question of acting in the natural affection that is planted in the heart of

man, and without which there is manifested one of the leading features of the last times. Instead of all that, a man could so retire from the need of even a father or mother that he could positively glorify God by neglecting the relationships of life. That was the meaning of "Corban," and that was a great system of religious fraud; and the Lord exposes what I may call the inward thing in connection with that of which we have already treated. The washing of certain things was external, but this principle connected with the word "Corban" was what really came out from the heart; it was a deliberate intention, by fraud, to reserve to one's self the right to use one's property when one pleased, and yet to get the name of devotedness as having consecrated it to God. That is the first great element of the state of degradation in which this favoured people of God were found here in this world.

But now there is another case, that not only was there all this external unreality, and this deep-seated determination to carry out the tradition of the elders, and the extinction of all that was correct and true with regard to the relationships of life, but there was also an empty system of mere lip service to God. "This people"—the Lord quotes from Isaiah xxix. in exposing the condition of man—"This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." Now how solemn it is to reflect on that. The

40 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

lips were all in activity, the mouth was ready to attest its willing witness, but the heart, which is the real seat, the real source of all that God cares for and looks at, and that no other eye but His can penetrate, the heart was perfectly lifeless and distant as far as God was concerned. "This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." And you will find just as then so now, that the bowed head, the rigid posture, and the wretched face are all consistent with a heart distant from God, and that all that sort of external pietism, if I may so express it, has not got in it that which God accounts as the germ of that which is really true to Him. The root principle of this is *unreality*, and that is the root of all that prevails and asserts itself at the present moment. The crying need just now is a breakdown in the minds of men in what is called religion. That is the great need of the day. And let it not be supposed that any class or body so called can claim immunity from a system like that; let no one suppose that this has no voice for him or her. There is nothing that can so infect the heart even of a Christian, a real child of God and a true follower of our Lord Jesus Christ, nothing that so stealthily gets into the inner being and permeates it as unreality. I am assured that it is just one of the things that Christians have to be on their watch

against at the present moment. We have to take heed lest we should be tinged and characterised by it. Thank God we do not need to go to human histories or human records to prove this. I often think what a mercy it is that it is not necessary for us to have to wade through the vileness of modern print and paper to find out what the true real condition of man away from God is: we have the record of it in the word of God. This abused, hated, slandered book has the whole record in it, not only of all that man is, and of all that man has done, but of what he will develope into.

Am I challenged as to *development*? I reply, I believe in the development of man, but in every kind of evil. I believe also in succession, but in succession of evil. Let those who will, grasp at both development and succession; I fully admit them; but that is the side on which they are. In the simple but very striking story that is told in the gospel history, and which we commonly speak of as the good Samaritan, do you observe the way in which that great truth is set forth by the Lord? "A certain man *went down* from Jerusalem to Jericho." That is man's course; that is the development that is marked out in scripture, and that we can see in the world all round about us at the present moment. Man's course has always been *down*; he never went from Jericho to Jeru-

42 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

saalem, from curse to blessing ; he always went the other way ; and more than that, he always will go the other way. There is that in him by nature, call it by what name you please, that he always goes from blessing to curse. It matters not whether it is internal blessing or external privilege, that he is introduced into, that is his course ; his way is ever to go down. "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho." And so in the passage before us, we have not only what we have already called attention to, this external attention to lip service and mouth homage, but the heart far from God.

And observe now one thing more which marked this terrible state and condition of man, viz., that there were certain *inventions of man* in connection with religion, which in their entirety set aside the word of God ; and that is the reason why the Lord lays such stress upon it here. He says, You have made the word of God of no effect by your tradition. There were the traditions of the elders, human traditions, and inventions, which might be perhaps in themselves harmless, as we would say ; but it is most solemn when we perceive how cleverly the devil works to get all these things in between the word of God and the soul. The first thing we shall find is, that these traditions of the elders or human traditions were at the commencement taken up as *supplementary* to scrip-

ture. You will never find that the devil in the first instance faces you with the thing he wants; he always has a bait, and you know what a bait is, a bait is something that covers a hook; and so the first thing here is that this tradition, useful in itself, said to be exceedingly helpful, and ancillary to the mind of God, was supplementary to scripture. That being admitted by any one, that these traditions of the elders spoken of here were supplementary, and had their place and were of value; then comes the next step, and the person that gives way to the first is prepared under a very clever process for this, that they are of equal value with the testimony of scripture. That is the next thing: it would not be the first; as such it would not succeed; the mind is persuaded to believe them very helpful and supplementary first, but as soon as ever it becomes *accustomed to that*, then comes the next step. I trust you will allow me to speak plainly, because I think these processes of departure are very solemn, the ways by which we become accustomed to things that perhaps at first we would shrink from. A person would at first reject the idea of a tradition of man at all; he would say; Not so, I cannot consent to aught but scripture. But the devil is very clever and very persuasive, and if you argue with him, he will master you before you know

44 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

where you are. If you debate with him, presently he will deposit his seed ; he will gain his point, and having vanquished you there he will use the vantage ground to work upon, and he will bring you to his side without your intending to go, and with a kind of reserve and resistance in your heart at first, but overpowered by his skill, you will admit the very thing that at the first you shrank from. And lastly, observe, and that is the greatest form of it when it reaches its height, these traditions are put above scripture. Here then are the three steps : first, *supplementary*, that is the thin edge of the wedge by which the position is eventually won ; secondly, *equality* ; thirdly, *superiority*. I think you will find all these steps in the way in which the word of God is set aside ; and thus this blessed book, this very lamp of life that is in our hands, this wonderful revelation that we have from God, is set aside practically, and when the things of man come in, the things of God go out. This then is the third great proof that the Lord gives here.

But there is one point more which I would call your attention to, and that is with regard to the question of *defilement*. I believe all these points are of the first importance, as bearing upon the present moment. The Lord next deals with the question of defilement, about which they were all astray. They were wrong

with regard to the external attention they paid to things, wrong with regard to the way in which they could traffic by religious fraud, wrong in the lip service which sprang from unreality, wrong in setting aside the word of God by human tradition, and they were wrong in regard to what defilement really was and where it came from; and therefore it is that the Lord shews here, in a very solemn way, that the heart of man is the real source and real fountain out of which the whole torrent of evil, as it was practised by man in this world, came. The stream flowed from that fountain; what is false and empty would fain persuade you that it was something from without which defiles; and if you allow that principle, that something from without corrupts and defiles, then you deny that man is in the condition in which God has declared in His word that he is; you remove the source from where the source really is, namely, the heart, the seat of everything that is foul and filthy. And therefore what the Lord does here is to bring us face to face with this: He says, "Out of the heart." You observe the difference; there is immense force in the words, "There is nothing entering in that can defile;" it is not from without, it is from within, "out of the heart," out of this corrupt fountain, out of this filthy cesspool of the first Adam, out of all that is

46 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

here, proceed the thirteen outgoings which he enumerates, thirteen symptoms of the vileness and pollution that is in man's heart by nature.

Now I have noticed often that there is a sort of modern sentiment (and there is very little more in modern times than empty sentiment) that rejoices in such a description as this, for instance, "a noble profligate," or of a ruffian who is said to have "kindliness of heart," but whose real inner being is as gentle as his hands are red—there is a kind of sentiment of that nature popular in this degenerate age; but for all that, the solemn words of our Lord Jesus Christ which lie embedded in this unfailing guide that we have from Him, remain true, and are evidenced by testimony that cannot be broken: "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, covetousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." These are the things that defile. Dwell upon these words and see what an exposure they are, what a revelation they supply of all that man is in his own nature, even if he be in the most favoured position on earth, externally blessed and privileged as the Jew was.

Let us now turn to the second, which is a far brighter one. There are two instances given under this second head, of mercy and kindness, of the grace and goodness revealed in our Lord

Jesus Christ, as in God's heart, towards poor, wretched things here in this world: namely, the Syrophenician woman, and the poor deaf man with an impediment in his speech.

Observe the way in which the Syrophenician woman is brought before us, the way we are introduced to this subject. First of all, the Lord, in consequence of the implacable hatred and deliberate refusal of His own countrymen, seeks retirement, and goes into the border country. But there is a little word added, "He could not be hid." There is a preciousness, a divine sweetness about that word as regards our Lord Jesus Christ that is beyond all expression. I believe that is the doctrine of all scripture, *Jesus never could be hid*. I believe all scripture witnesses to that fact: the types, the promises, the prophecies of the Old Testament could not conceal Him, "He could not be hid"—blessed, precious words! As we stand now and look at them from the blessed vantage ground on which Christianity sets us, as we look back over these holy writings and survey their depths, that which meets us continually is how His Person runs like a golden thread through every part; and so here, literally and in fact, while He is in this world, though He retired, "He could not be hid." And oh! there is something so interesting to the heart and its affections in the fact of this retirement. The

48 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

activities of Christ and His *withdrawals* into the isolated places are all perfect in their place ; they give us an insight into who He was, and what He was, and what moved and actuated Him as the Servant Prophet, the character in which this gospel sets Him forth. Never did He press Himself into notice ; withdrawal and retirement were what marked Him, specially in His service. Would to God it marked His people more in their christian life and course ! “ He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall his voice be heard in the street ”—lowly grace, lowly retirement. And yet there was a glory of goodness, a glory of kindness, and a glory of grace in His Person that burst out from all retirement ; though He went away, “ He could not be hid.” I bless God for those words, and what they set forth to my heart as to our Lord Jesus Christ. Here “ He could not be hid.” A poor wretched woman comes with one of the heaviest domestic trials that could bow down a human heart. His fame had reached her, she had built on what she had heard of Him ; she had listened to the report with regard to Him, and on it she ventures to come. There are three things said about her : I believe her creed and language are set before us in the fact that she was a Greek ; and her nation comes before us in the fact that she was a Canaanite or Syrophenician,

that is to say, a reprobate of reprobates, for that is really the meaning of it. Do you know that the Canaanite will be extinguished in the day when the Son of David is in power? And therefore this very striking case comes before us in order to bring out the wonderful mercy of God in our Lord Jesus Christ. A person that was unentitled in every sense of the word, and had no claim whatever; neither her race, or language, or creed, or origin entitled her in any sense to consideration. It is one of the strongest cases that could be brought before us in scripture to prove a little word in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, "abundance of grace." Ah! this is the case to demonstrate "abundance of grace" for one that had no title, one who was externally and in every way repulsive.

Further, observe what is said about her; she came, and she besought Him, and she fell at His feet. Thank God for those words! A poor Canaanite, a poor creature that had no claim at all, can come and beseech Him and fall at His feet. The fifteenth chapter of Matthew, where this incident is recorded according to the character of that gospel, furnishes the detail of the threefold test which she was passed through. If you examine it, you will find she was tested in three ways; first of all, she was tested by *silence*. "He answered her not a word." Has your faith

50 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

ever been tested in that way? Do you know what it is to have cried day and night to a silent Christ? "He answered her not a word." Oh what a trial of faith that was! Could it be possible that He did not hear, or that He heard without attention? Could it be possible that His heart was not capable of being touched by her misery? "He answered her not a word." But there was more. It was not only that He was silent, but the Gospel of Matthew gives us His positive refusal. What was that? It is not right, "it is not meet," it is not just, "to take the children's bread:" you have no title to it. She came as a child, that is to say, by using the term Son of David she came to Him under a relationship that she was not in, and He says, As Son of David I refuse you, it is not right to take the children's bread. But there was even more than that, there was *reproach*—"and to cast it to dogs." Thus she was tested in this threefold way, *silence, refusal, reproach*. And the word the blessed Lord uses is a very remarkable word; I do not think it is used anywhere else in the original of the New Testament except here. The word is the diminutive, which means "a little dog," the very lowest of its species, "It is not right to take the children's bread, and to cast it to little dogs."

So now faith is proved—through some test very much akin to this. I have met with Christians

who have been sorely tested and tried in their faith. Peter tells us that faith will assuredly undergo trying, "That the proving of your faith, much more precious than of gold which perishes, though it be proved by fire." The allusion here is to the proving of gold, the metal is subjected to the fire, and the flame is increased and increased until the image of the refiner is reflected in the coin. There is, observe, no mitigation of the fire, no reduction of the strength of the flame, until the image of the one who is dealing with it is seen in it. Faith is always subjected in that way to testing; and so this poor woman's faith was proved in this threefold way.

But there is a beautiful little word here which is peculiar to the Gospel of Mark, which I must take notice of, taken along with the Gospel of Matthew, they make a beautiful whole. The Lord says to her, according to this Gospel, and this may have helped to keep alive the flickering flame of faith in her heart—"Let the children *first* be filled." That left a little ray of hope for her poor heart. "Let the children *first* be filled." And so she might have said to herself, "Well, there is a little *reserve* there; there is a crumb let fall on purpose for me." As Boaz had said in other days, "Let fall some handfuls on purpose for her." "Let the children first be filled;" and so her hope would rise and her heart would live on through the fire of testing, and her faith

52 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

be nourished by His grace and kindness. And then it is beautiful to think how that may have given the first flush of hope to that poor broken heart, and she would reason somewhat like this to herself, "Surely He does not mean to refuse me altogether, surely He means that I should prevail, surely He intends to be overcome by my misery." I can conceive how all that would pass through her mind as His gracious words first fell upon her ear.

Next observe her answer to Him, and it is very beautiful; she says, "Yea, Lord;" she takes up the very word in the original that He used, or at least the root of it, and she says, "True, Lord, I am only an unentitled, miserable, wretched dog." She takes that place, this was her soul's "Amen," she accepts His verdict, she stands before Him unentitled, but her faith still cleaves to Him for the absolute goodness that was in Him. Behind all that dark cloud of testing that light was there, and it is lovely to think that it fell upon her heart. God grant it may be in your souls and mine when we are tested, to be able to say, like the patriarch of old, "When I am tried, I shall come forth as gold," having the refiner's image and the refiner's likeness stamped upon the purified coin.

And now mark the word she gets from Him "For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter." He did not praise her

adroitness or her humility, but He commended her faith, the faith which the goodness of His own Person, as He stood there before her, kindled and kept alive : " O woman, great is thy faith."

Now let us turn to another instance of the mercy and goodness which were manifested in our Lord Jesus Christ in this poor man that was deaf and had an impediment in his speech. We shall only notice two or three points. First of all, there was the faith of the persons that brought him, for they came and besought Him. I have no doubt that what kept alive that faith in their hearts was just the goodness that shone in our Lord Jesus Christ. The friends of this poor man, for he was powerless in speech himself, came, attracted by this. Just look what He does ; He takes him aside, out of the town. Have you not found in your history that He has done that to you oftentimes ? Do you not remember that time you were ill ? That time you were laid low in fever ? Have you forgotten that time when the heavy blow of affliction came into your house ? He was then taking you aside out of the town. I believe the Lord in special dealings with us takes us thus aside. Of Jacob it is said that he was "*left alone ;*" but it is a wonderful solitude, solitude with Christ. " He took him aside." And then we have the action, which is beautiful and suited

54 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

to the case, though I shall not speak of it now. But observe two things connected with the action.

First of all, He looked up to heaven. What does that convey to us? Is He not here seen as the *perfect servant*, "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." He says, as it were, I have come from heaven, I am the Servant-Prophet out of heaven for God and men. How blessed, "He looked up to heaven." All mission, all power, all grace is from thence—there is nothing except from heaven; the second Man is out of heaven; the true Servant was the One who was in the service of heaven. "He looked up to heaven."

Then there is another word, "He sighed," or as some have translated it, "He groaned." Here then is the compassionate Servant, here is the tender heart that felt for all, that was touched by human misery, *the One* who passed unscathed and unmoved through everything, but felt it all. How blessed to have before us such a Christ, and to have revealed to us how He felt! how He groaned! how He sighed!

And then lastly, there is the word of power. The true Servant, the compassionate Man, and yet at the same time, blessed for ever be His name, the mighty God. "Ephphatha: be opened." "He spake and it was done;" He had but to utter the word, and the result was there.

HAVING CHRIST.

55

And then He sought retirement again; He commanded them not to make it known; He did not seek publicity, or popularity, blessed be His name—all that prevails in the church-world and world-church of to-day, was far away from the mind of Jesus Christ. No; He was the Servant out of heaven, that came to do the will of Him that sent Him. But they could not keep silence; their tongues must speak His praise. And I am sure that we, through grace, can add our hearty amen to the words that went out concerning Him on all sides, "He hath done all things well." How blessed to say that, as we have often sung it. And even though it may be through tears, and loss, and pain, and sorrow, through weary days and weary nights, still the heart that knows Him and that He has touched can say, "He hath done all things well; he maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak."

W. T. T.

(Notes of an Address.)

 HAVING CHRIST.

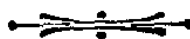
To have Christ—I mean practically to walk with Him and after Him, to have communion with the Father and the Son, to walk in unfeigned obedience and lowliness: to live in realised dependence on Christ and have His

56 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

secret with us, and realise the Father's love ; to have our affections set on things above, to walk in patience and yet confidence through this world, this is what we have to seek ; and if we realise it we shall be a testimony, whether individually or collectively ; *but in possessing the things themselves*, and they form us through grace, so that we are one (that is, a testimony), *but seeking or setting up to be it does not*. Moses did not seek to have his face shine, nor *even know* when it did, but when he had been with God it did so. A shining face never sees itself. The true heart is occupied with Christ, and in a certain sense and measure self is gone. The right thought is not to think of self at all—save as we have to judge it. . . .

Occupation with our state will never bring us one whit nearer the Lord ; it will only distress, enfeeble, and enslave our souls. Occupation *with Christ* will produce every moment increasing conformity to His image. The true remedy therefore for a bad state, is Christ so completely filling our vision—Christ in what He is and what He has done—that self cannot be seen in the light of His glory. *State* is not everything, but Christ is everything ; and in proportion as we learn this lesson will our state meet His mind.

J. N. D.



THE PERSON AND OFFICE OF THE SPIRIT.

NO. II.

IT is very blessed and interesting to the heart to observe the position His own are found occupying in Acts i., in relation to the promise of the Person who was coming, of whom we were speaking in our last.

First, they were in His own company, as the risen One, for forty days ; He had fulfilled to them His promise ere He left them, "I will see you again"—their hearts were glad in having Him once more, the sorrow of their loss by His death was now behind them ; it was the very same Jesus on whom their eyes rested, only He was with them *in risen power* ; He had left behind for ever the sorrow of His path on earth—the cross, the grave ; He was there before their very eyes in very truth as the risen One out from among the dead. Let us try and think what a blessed moment that must have been for Him and them. *He*, the blessed One, was there in the new estate of man beyond the bearing of sin, beyond death and the grave, risen from the dead, not yet "taken up." *They*, His brethren *now*, were

CT

58 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

there with Him, fruit of His victory and triumph over every hostile power, owned by Him, as such to themselves, through the lips of the woman, to whom the world was but a tomb without Him; what blessed *memories of the past*, and *realities* of their then relationship with His Father now their Father, His God now their God, must have been present to their hearts. Further, they were *expectants* of a new and heavenly power they were to receive from Him when received up into glory.

Let us observe here the beautiful *intimacy* that is brought before us in the words, "*Speaking* the things concerning the kingdom of God." (R. V.) He is here in all His resurrection life and power, first fruits of them that slept, yet His heart, full of divine love, is not removed, is not any the farther away from His own. What an immense blessing to the heart to know the risen Lord *near us*, that He holds us as friends and loved ones still.

But further, observe we are told what was the subject of their conversation; the *character* of it was as we have seen *intimacy*, the *subject* of it, was "concerning the kingdom of God." We find that this was preached afterwards by His servants, and among them by him who was especially the apostle of the Gentiles; in proof compare Acts xx. 25 and chapter xxviii. 31. There are three words here to which I would

THE PERSON AND OFFICE OF THE SPIRIT. 59

very particularly direct attention, as illustrating their position at this time in relation to the promise of the Father.

First, "wait." They are therefore set as *expectants* of this heavenly endowment. This shews the very opposite to *settling down* here, out of which He their Master had died and risen again.

Observe the word here translated *wait* (*περιμενειν*) is the same word used in Genesis xlix. 18 in the Septuagint, and the connection there is very beautiful. Jacob's blessing of the tribes, as in that chapter, refers to *responsibility*, and when he came to Dan, though owned as a judging tribe, and so Israel in him, yet he marks out that apostasy and power of Satan in Israel, which led the remnant to look beyond the portion of the people, unfaithful in every way, to Him who was the salvation: "We have waited for thy salvation, O Jehovah." This marks *expectancy* here as the position of His own in Acts i.

Second, "power" (Greek, *δυναμιν*). This was a new power with which they were to be *filled*, heavenly power; as we have seen, they were set by the risen Lord as expectants of this, and so they were found here in weakness, yet in dependence, out of the world and all that pertains to it, in an upper room, in prayer and supplication, "with the women, and Mary

60 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." What a lovely picture these verses display before us! and does not this upper room here fit well in with that other recorded in Luke xxii. 12, where we see Him, a Stranger in this world, with His own?

Then let us also observe those words "*with one accord*;" how blessed as the result of *risen life* in each, *not yet united*, for the Spirit had not yet been received, still as such expectants of the "heavenly gift." This expression, "with one accord," recurs eleven times in the Acts, and nowhere else, except once, in Romans xv. 6.

Third, "witnesses" (Greek, *μαρτυρες*). Our English word martyr is derived from that translated *witness*. The qualification for a witness was this heavenly endowment for which they waited; they were to receive power at the coming of the Holy Spirit upon them *to this very end*. It is of the deepest moment to us to understand that a witness of Christ, was and is, of Christ *rejected*, yet *risen*, despised of men, but now exalted of God in heaven. If His testimony ended in *martyrdom*, as far as man's wicked hands were concerned, they were to look for a similar end, and as a rule they so terminated their course, so that we may say, in a certain sense, for any witness of a once crucified and martyred Christ, or as Stephen was of a glorified Christ, to die a natural death is *un-*

MARK VIII.

61

natural, and so of life as of death, to be a witness of a rejected Christ, one must be *unworldly* and *unearthly*.

Further, it is interesting to note the contrast between this and what we have in the Revelation; there the kingdom in manifestation is introduced, and the saints are kings and priests unto God and His Father, but when Acts is opened, they are witnesses, that is, martyrs to an absent rejected Christ and Lord in the power and energy of God the Holy Ghost. May we covet more and more to be in the true sense of the term His witnesses.

W. T. T.

Condensed Notes of an Address, No. 2.



MARK VIII.

DALMANUTHA.

THERE are really four subjects in this chapter, namely, the feeding of the four thousand, the instruction at Dalmanutha, the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida, and the incident at Cæsarea Philippi. I desire by God's help to engage your attention with three of them, at this time.

First of all, with regard to the feeding of this multitude. You will observe one little word here that, I think, gives the key to the under-

62 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

standing of what was intended by the incident, and that is the word "seven," for there are not only seven loaves multiplied, in the Lord's grace, so as to meet the need of the four thousand, but the excess was seven baskets; therefore the word "seven" (though I do not desire to lay any unnecessary stress upon numbers), is, to my mind, deeply interesting in the incident. Elsewhere there were twelve, indeed the Lord alludes to it here Himself when He is instructing His disciples. He says, "When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven."

Now I believe there is a divine intention in every word of scripture, and that the alteration from seven to twelve or from twelve to seven has a divine purport in it. I would therefore invite you to think for a moment of what is conveyed to us in it.

If we study and search for ourselves and examine the scriptures where the words occur, I think we shall find that where it is a question of human instrumentality twelve is always the number used; twelve is always the completeness of man; whereas seven is certainly here, as I suppose it would be elsewhere in a bad

MARK VIII.

63

sense, the perfection of what is superhuman, good or bad. Twelve is the human number; and therefore it was seven here, because it is no question of what comes from man, or of the instrumentality which God is pleased to find and use in men, making them the subjects of it. But here, where the Lord is rejected (and that is what underlies the narrative in a very striking way), refused by the people as their Messiah, refused as the One who really had rights and claims over that nation—His own goodness and His own grace rose above all the need that was there, went beyond all the rejection which was in their hearts, finding the motives entirely in Himself, so that, rejected though He was, He still feeds them. Hence, I believe, the word “seven” is used because it is the perfection, fulness, and completeness of what is divine. And it is not contingent upon man’s reception at all; His own blessed goodness, that which was inherent in Himself, and found its springs entirely in Himself, rising triumphant beyond and above all the evil that was in man, acts in a grace and love entirely His own.

How blessed to think of it, and to dwell upon it: rejected though He was, refused and cast out by that people, despised and disowned, still mark those words, they are precious words, “I have compassion.” Compassion for those

64 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

that would not have Him ; compassion for those that rejected Him ; compassion, though He was an outcast and despised in the midst of His own ! We in our littleness would have had the smallest of our compassions dried up ; we could not have lived through the scorn that Jesus Christ received from men ; however true the grace that was in us, feeble and small in itself, it would have withered before the contempt of men. It shines out all the more blessed and more perfect in its own nature in Him. Do we enjoy the contrast ? Do we respond to the blessedness that was seen only in Jesus Christ ? Have our hearts dwelt on those words, "*I have compassion* on the multitude" ? I will not send them empty to their homes, because they will faint by the way. Think of how He entered into everything !

I do not think we take in sufficiently how the grace and kindness of Christ and of God come out even more in little things than in great things. And that is just where the contrast is with us. Somehow or other we rise up to great occasions, but very often little things unman us. Somehow we make a great effort and great attempts to match some great occasion that is upon us, but little circumstances, little difficulties, little besetments in ourselves, or else little things, little trials, little sorrows in others, seem to be so small that they are beneath us. But it was

MARK VIII.

63

not so with God, it was not so with Christ, and therefore you observe the same thing exactly, not only in the Jehovah of the Old Testament, but in the One who was God manifest in flesh in the New. "I have compassion on the multitude."

Notice the way in which that is met by the disciples; see how little it touched their hearts, how little they entered into it, how little they were set on fire by the goodness of Jesus Christ; how little they were really moved as He was pleased to express the boundlessness of the grace that was in His heart. Mark what they say: "From whence shall *a man*"? They never got beyond man, human resource measured all that was in their hearts. "From whence shall a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?" They owned no source from whence anything could come but man; they were tied and bound down to man. Is not the generation we are living in very like that? This is the day of human resource, the day when man brings into operation all that he can in connection with needs and wants, whether in the church or the world; the day in which the strength of man, the arm of man, the energy and wisdom and power of man, are all looked to; and the danger is that God is outside, and that faith is lost in Christ, and in the Holy Ghost, and in what is divine. I see it in connection even with the work of

66 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

God. I gladly and willingly rejoice to own any desire there may be in the hearts of any to bring the truth of God to bear upon perishing men and women ; but faith in the old testimony of this word, faith in the message itself, faith in the power that is behind this word to apply it, faith to make it palatable, faith in it itself because it is attractive and has sweetness in it that no human power can add to—that is lost, that does not exist in this day. It is attempted to make it attractive, to mix it with all the miserable ingredients that man brings to bear upon it. And why? Because the simple, old, blessed truth itself, the naked power of that sword that is in our hands, and the almighty power of God the Holy Ghost in using it, is lost sight of or given up, and man is turned to, just as here, “From whence shall a man”? It reminds me of the words of the poor impotent man in John v. ; he was lying there round the pool of Bethesda with others, and he says, “Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool.” “I have no man.” Oh, how blessed it is to go back on these compassions, and on these resources which are here! How blessed to draw out of the fulness that is in Jesus Christ! And how easy it is for us to forget, as they did, past deliverances. Memory is but a poor help in the things of God, because memory fails and

MARK VIII.

67

droops. There were past deliverances by Jesus Christ, and past interventions of power through Him, but yet the disciples had forgotten it all, lost sight of it, and turned to man.

Now mark the result for a moment. The Lord feeds them, blessed for ever be His name, and gratifies His own heart too. That is what is so comforting; He gratifies His heart in doing good to the poor, wretched people who would not have Him! But there is this remarkable word of the Spirit of God with regard to it; He feeds them and the need is met; but I desire we should get the sense of that little word, which expresses so much, "They did eat and were *filled*." That is the result of having to do with Jesus Christ; here is the result of the opening out of His own blessed hand for us, whether temporally or spiritually. In this we see the consequence of the bestowment of His grace when it is taken in, because it is said, "They did all eat;" and that is the word that is used in scripture for the appropriation of Christ by our souls. The very same word which we can understand in connection with taking in food for the body, is the word that is used for the appropriation of Christ in connection with our spiritual need. He says in John vi., for instance, "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me." "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink

68 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." That is to say, there must be the appropriation in faith of Christ. But when there is that, whether it be in the case of the bodily need, as here, or whether it be in the case of the soul's need, wherever Christ is appropriated, there is fulness and satisfaction as the result of it. Have we proved that? Are we filled? Am I asked, What is meant by that? I mean this, are we satisfied? Has He in His infinite grace so met us, just as He satisfied the hungry bodies of these four thousand, that we can say in the words of Psalm xxiii., "He maketh me to lie down in pastures of tender grass"? That is because the soul is filled; it is the result of satisfaction; further, it is rest, repose. We know very well how that is just the crying need of God's people at the present moment; there is but little rest or repose. It is all so like those instruments of two wheels, the only principle upon which they can go is *motion*; restless, often tumultuous, motion. And why is all this? Because the heart has not come to anchor, has not come to rest in the satisfaction that Jesus Christ alone can give to it. This sweet rest will never be found anywhere

MARK VIII.

69

else; we may search and traverse the wide world round and over, but in vain, it never can be found in another. But, thank God, it is there in Him; thank God, there is rest there, satisfaction there. And it is not only in what He gives, *but in what He can be to the soul*. Here it was the bestowment of His grace and favour to meet the hungry bodies of men, and to satisfy their temporal needs; but what was true in bodily want is true spiritually. And therefore, having through grace to do with Him to-day, having personally appropriated Him for the wants and cravings and longings of the heart to-day, we can ante-date that time that will come even for this earth, of which it is said, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." That will be a scene on this earth by-and-by; but that truth may be known spiritually in the soul to-day, in the midst of desolation and misery and wretchedness all round about. Let us, then, remember those two things, the seven loaves that were multiplied to feed the four thousand, and the seven baskets of excess over and above the necessities of the persons which were fed. I believe those

70 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF .

two circumstances in the history give us the key to the understanding of the spiritual meaning of this incident, the fact that the provision was divinely perfect despite His rejection, and that the excess was perfect also. I love to think of the excess. We ought, when we bestow a favour, to do something further in the way of excess, to shew that we are not exhausted by the gift. But I see that no one does that but God ; when we shew kindness we exhaust our resources, because our resources are finite ; when He expresses His goodness, His resources are never exhausted, because the need could be no measure of the supply that comes from Him. We are finite, and our resources must fail ; He is infinite, and finite need cannot exhaust infinite resources.

The second subject we have here is the instruction by the Lord at Dalmanutha, which was based on this miracle, and on the audacious opposition of the Pharisees. The Pharisees came and got into conflict with Him, demanding a sign from heaven. That was audacious, bold unbelief, and He felt it, as He felt everything ; "He sighed deeply in his spirit." First of all, their hardened heart of unbelief touched Him ; secondly, I believe there was also in it that He felt what the influence on others would be of the religious leaders' blindness and darkness. I have no doubt it was a forecast of His own cross

MARK VIII.

71

and suffering. And then notice the words, "He left them and departed." That is very solemn; it is final rejection; some one has called it "*justas severitas*" (hard justice); they rejected Him, He rejects them. And what makes it very solemn is that He never came back publicly there again; I do not say He never came back again; but as *the great Prophet* in works of mercy, He left them for ever, He never publicly appeared in the goodness and grace of His heart in that region any more.

He instructs His disciples afterwards in connection with that incident in two ways. First of all, He says to them, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod." Observe where they were when the Lord spoke those words. He had gone into the ship, the disciples were with Him, and they had forgotten to take bread; and He says to them, in connection with this terrible unbelief of the Pharisees, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod." It is amazing that any person who has at all searched prayerfully the scriptures, should have any difficulty or doubt about the meaning of the word "leaven," namely, that leaven in scripture is always and universally the symbol of what is evil. And yet you know the way it is used, and the extraordinary meaning that is put upon it, contrary to the whole tenour and teaching of God's word.

72 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

“Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.” What was the leaven of the Pharisees? It was that hypocritical, two-faced appearance of holy zeal for God, with desperate unreality in their hearts; externally the appearance of great zeal, but inwardly the very opposite, yea the contrast of it in every sense. That was the leaven of the Pharisees.

What was the leaven of Herod? Servile cringing to the world: Herod was the very creature of worldliness and worldly circumstances. And there is another leaven spoken of that is not noticed here, and that is the leaven of the Sadducees, which is what is called at the present moment *rationalism*. The Sadducees were the rationalists of that day, and the Pharisees were the ritualists of that day, and the Herodians the worldly party. You get the three things, fleshly religion; occupation of mind with the things of God, as if the mind could grasp them; and the deep-seated, deep-rooted love of the world which marked the Herodians; those are the three. But the Sadducees are left out in Mark: “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.”

I desire particularly to call your attention to one thing in connection with this, namely, that when the Lord used those words they were not in a position to profit by the meaning. Was He to be blamed for using the word “leaven” to

MARK VIII.

73

them? God forbid the thought in any heart, or that He ever used any word or expression save what was absolutely perfect and blessed, as coming from the lips of Him who was perfect God as He was truly and really Man. Yet He uses this word "leaven," and He impresses the great truth of it upon them, and tells them to beware of it, puts them upon their guard, and yet they cannot profit. Here was the greatest of all teachers, here was by pre-eminence the great Prophet, yet His disciples, who were round Him and with Him, and were familiar with His utterances, were unable to profit by His language. Why? Just for the very reason many are oftentimes unable to profit by good, sound, wholesome words to-day. Why? They were *not wilfully* blind, but they were *in fact* blind. There is a great difference between a certain position in fact, and *the will entering into it*, so that the will as it were gathers it up to itself. The disciples were not wilfully blind, but they were in fact blind, because they took in so little of His Person, and of who He was and what He was. And hence we can see it is not enough to have good words, sound words, and words easily to be understood. But further, there is a moral condition and a moral state necessary to profit by the clearest words. There is a positive absolute necessity for a moral state, and condition, to be able to take in the instruction that

74 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

comes from the clearest words. One of the most important things in this chapter is how they totally misunderstood the word "leaven." How did they interpret it? Even that they had forgotten to take bread ; they were in a ship at sea, and no bread ; they connected the word "leaven" with the literal fact of the absence of bread from the ship, and therefore mistook altogether, and lost His instruction.

But then this very position they were in here was the very suited one for this instruction ; and I have no doubt in His blessed grace He had designed it all to lead them into the understanding of the great lesson He had for them at that moment. What was it? Why He was really leading them to understand what the heart would have in having Him. Oh that I had a better conception of it, so as to be able to convey it to others ; but yet how blessed to be so led by Him, and to be so in circumstances for Him to lead, that we find out the absolute sufficiency and the absolute fulness there is in Himself, without anything else beside. How often we say, "That is indispensable." But He would teach us there is nothing "indispensable" but Himself. He is the alone indispensable :

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
All in all in Thee I find."

That, I believe, is the lesson here ; they were at sea, had no bread, no provision, were utterly

MARK VIII.

75

resourceless and utterly destitute, and the Lord brings before them one little word, "I," "I." This is the emphatic word in the narrative. He brings Himself before them. What then if they had no bread? If the Maker of the bread was there, had they not all? What if no provision were there, if the One who did supply the need of four thousand and five thousand was there Himself? It is a wonderful moment when the heart is led into this great reality, the utter resourcelessness of man on the one hand, the entire completeness and fulness that there is in Christ on the other; "Jesus, Thou art enough." Another has truly said that what the Lord brings out here is that continent of blessing on which the heart of old Simeon found its rest in days before, when he had the child Jesus in his arms; it is the shore the dying thief landed on; it is the place, far better than all else, that the apostle speaks of. And it is that unknown region to which every one of us, every Christian, must come sooner or later, either on a death-bed, or else as Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. We know if death were to knock at our door to-night, if we had Christ we should not want anything else, beside Himself and His work.

It is an immense thing for the conscience that the work of Christ should be before the soul. The work that was done on Calvary's cross, and nothing else, it is this which alone gives title to

76 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

the soul ; but the heart wants something as well as the conscience, and it is not only that I am entitled in the work, but I have a *new footing* and sufficiency in Himself. That instance of Simeon is a beautiful one. There was a man with prospects, and it is said that prospects are far more dangerous and have far greater effect upon us than possessions, because you know the value of possessions, but you cannot tell what a prospect is. Simeon, the earthly man, had prospects, and he comes into the place where the child Jesus was brought in by His parents, and when he saw Him, he took Him up in his arms, and when he had Him in his arms, he just said what in principle poor old Jacob said when his eyes rested upon his long-lost son, Joseph, "Now let me die ; since I have seen thy face : " " Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word ; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." His cup of happiness was full ; he wanted no more ; he had Christ. Have we ? We know something of His work : have we got Himself, and got Himself in such present possession, that though we are in the poorest human circumstances, without a loaf, without a meal, destitute of what people call the indispensables of life, we can give thanks, and say, " I have all and abound, I am full." That is what comes out here ; that is the instruction that was conveyed, and this was the very place to convey it to them.

MARK VIII.

77

One word more in connection with it. We are passing through a critical moment, a moment of deep trial. I have no doubt there is a sort of sifting and shaking all around and about in every circle—*domestically, commercially, politically, ecclesiastically*, wherever you go you must be arrested by it: it is a peculiar moment we are in.

But I treat now of what relates to us ecclesiastically, of what belongs to us as Christians, members of Christ's body. If there is one sphere in which the power of evil has shewn itself with a freer hand than in another at the present moment, it is in the church of God. Alas! it is there the devil has wrought with tremendous virulence and created the most solemn confusion, scattering on all sides like the wolf that he is. We have stormy waters and elements lashed into fury by the rage of the enemy of God and man; the rolling tide terrifies many a timid mind, and the tendency is to forget the One who is in the boat: we think He is asleep, and, rudely oftentimes, we go to Him and say, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" This lesson comes to us wonderfully in this way; the person that in his own circumstances and history as a solitary individual is walking the highway of this world, has learnt this great lesson, Christ is enough for me, Christ is sufficient for my heart and soul, the person that has learnt His friendship, and

78 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

His company, and the fulness there is in Him, that can say through grace, Well, thank God, Christ is all I want here, that is the person that will stand for Him in the midst of present departure. It was so with Paul; he was forsaken by everybody: "At my first answer no man stood with me;" he was actually left alone; he had not a companion, he had not a friend, he had not one to stand by his side at that moment: yet he could face the most dreadful tribunal in the whole world, and did not quake before the thought of Nero's judgment-seat. Why? Because in his soul he had found out for himself the sufficiency of Christ. That is the reason. Thank God Christ abides and is sufficient. And therefore amid the general departure and giving up of truth on all sides the heart finds its rest in Him who is ever the same, and its delight is the word, "Thou remainest." Christ remains, the Holy Ghost remains, and the supreme authority of scripture remains; and as long as we have that trinity, as it were, Christ, the Holy Ghost, and scripture, may God keep us holding fast for Him.

You will find the sufficiency of Christ comes in in that way; it is Christ Himself in all His own blessedness. This is what the disciples learnt; they were brought into circumstances, into that very position most suitable, in His perfect wisdom and grace, to find out this, that

MARK VIII.

67

having Him they had enough. Oh what a charm to the heart to find out that Christ is enough ! What a reality ! It is nothing that we can see, we cannot shew it to anybody ; but it is a treasure that only our own heart knows ; a secret, if we like to call it so, of our own souls with Him, with which a stranger intermeddled not. This keeps the heart, this steadies the soul ; this is divine anchorage for the present moment.

May God in His infinite grace above all things lead us to know what Christ is. I feel it to be the pressing demand of the moment. How little we think about it ! May our hearts more and more find out what He can be to us ; and though destitute of everything in this world, without a loaf, without bread, may we be able to say, Thank God, He is there, and all sufficient as well. This is *resurrection ground* in figure ; and when we reach resurrection ground there is nothing but Christ ; and this is a large place, a wealthy place ; Christ makes it this, and here we are outside of all else. It is possible to truly love Him *before this* ; I believe the disciples truly loved Him, but they had not yet learnt that having Him they had everything. And so now, there are those that truly love Him, but they have not found out *Christ enough, Christ sufficient, Christ all*. As the apostle expresses it when he says, "I have all and abound," again,

80 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

“Christ is all,” again, “I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound : everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ.”

This simple incident at Dalmanutha is full of the most blessed instruction in this way, teaching us what there is in His dear Son, of fulness, sufficiency for every want and need of the heart.

W. T. T.

(Notes of an Address.)

SACRAMENTS.

I THINK the sacraments have a larger bearing than I was aware. They are (1 Cor. x.) for the wilderness. One introduces into the wilderness, but it is Christ's death (Rom. vi.) not ours. Only I thereon reckon myself dead as a consequence—place, too, in baptism—in the likeness of His. But we have not in Romans “resurrection with ;” and even where we have, as I think we must say in Colossians ii., “no ascension,” we seek the things above in Canaan. Then the manna was for the wilderness only and the spiritual drink. That is one brings into, the other sustains in the wilderness. So we shew forth Christ's death “till he come.” I take my place in the world, consequent on Christ's death a wilderness. It is not the corn of the land.

SACRAMENTS.

81

But we are all one body. Here for myself I have union with the saints, and my place is in virtue of union with Him, still as down here. We are the body of Christ as down here—not as in this world without the cross, for then I do not know redemption, do not enter into the Holiest to worship. I am on earth, but in the consciousness of being a member of the one body, which implies union with Christ. But it is on earth I celebrate it, not in heaven, that is, not as being there myself. I look at the humiliation as over with Him, but remember Him in it. Note it is not the passover here; that went with corn of the land, Canaan and circumcision. I am in the fruit of redemption, but in the wilderness, but in the unity of the body.

With the manna we must take in Christ's death, of course according to John vi. Our service in it is simply owning the preciousness of His death, and till He come. Our state is in resurrection, but we are occupied with, and celebrate His having come once down here, and shew forth His death. The question is, Where are we when we celebrate it? In the wilderness. What are we? Members of one body, united to Christ in fact. In a responsible place in the wilderness, but by redemption, and really united to Christ, or I could not talk of the unity of the body.

1865.

J. N. D.

FRAGMENT.

SEEK to have Christ in you more abundantly, and there will be many an influx of *joy*. None of us are as happy as we might be. For many Christians carry such repulsive countenances and shed around them such a chill that if they should ever try to win an unconverted person, that person might well retort, "If your religion carries such a face as yours, I do not want it." Such Christians cheat themselves out of their birthright; Jesus promised them that if they continued to abide in His love, His joy would remain in them and their joy would be full.

Joy is *love looking at its treasures*. The richer we become in having Christ with us here, and in the expectation of being with Him for evermore, the more investments we make in helping other people, and in blessing and saving the souls of others, the more full will be our casket of jewels.

T. L. C.

GOD be merciful unto *us* and bless *us*—us, us! Yes, there is the—all over. Whatever of good in earth or heaven, it is for *us*; *we* are the people; let us have it!

“HE IS NOT HERE.”

(JOHN XX. 1-13.)

SHE came to the sepulchre early,
 In the dawning of the day,
 Where, wound in the linen and spices
 She thought her Master lay ;
 As, with loving hands, they had wrapped Him,
 And laid Him, in death, away.

For dim was her soul—as the garden,
 Clear faith she did not know,
 And when love saw the sepulchre empty,
 Her heart was filled with woe ;
 And she ran with the tidings to tell them,
 In fear that it was so.

They came, and they saw, and departed,
 They had homes where their Lord had died ;
 While she in her desolate sorrow
 Stayed weeping His grave beside ;
 Their *eyes* saw the sepulchre empty,
 Her *heart* would by it abide.

She stood there without, until stooping,
 She looked into the sepulchre,
 And saw there were two angels sitting
 Where His head and His feet once were ;
 And the white of their spotless raiment
 Shone out from the gloom in there.

Did she gaze on this wonderful vision,
 These angels in white arrayed ?
 Nay, the sorrowing heart of Mary
 Was empty beyond their aid—

84 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

“ They have taken away my Lord,
And I know not where He is laid.”

But a voice came from One who was standing
Outside, in the light of the day,
And ask'd “ Why she wept, whom was seeking ? ”
Blind sorrow alone could say—
“ Sir, tell me if hence thou hast borne Him,
And I will take Him away.”

But her name from the lips of her Saviour,
Who had loved, and heal'd, and known,
In tones of such love as could only
Come forth from His grace alone,
Reveal'd He was there, Himself, present ;
“ Rabboni ” !—she Him doth own.

Yet not as of old came the Master,
To the touch of a mortal hand,
He was going away to His Father,
The First of a heavenly band ;
His God is the God of His brethren,
His Father, theirs, in that land.

And unto His brethren He giveth
His, the Victor's, peace to know ;
And He breathes of His Spirit upon them,
That in His peace they may go
With hearts far away in the heavens,
His cross, and His grave below.

L. J. M.



THE PERSON AND OFFICE OF THE SPIRIT.

No. III.

BUT the moment of *endowment* had now arrived, and all was ready for the fulfilment of the promise, and the bestowment of this *clothing of power*. Pentecost as a fact is now before us, and it came between the Passover and Tabernacles.

It is well to observe that, as a Jewish feast, the feast of weeks, first it was dependent on the Passover, so that we may say, if there were no Passover there could be no Pentecost; further, it was supposed to mark the giving of the law, and it was beside the dedication of all the fruit of the land. (See Lev. xxiii.)

But when we study it in all the deep and blessed connections in which it comes to us as the day of Pentecost "*fully come*," as in Acts ii., how precious it is in all its surroundings and settings. Let us dwell for a little on the great *fact* itself. Let us see what it means.

When the Lord Jesus was pleased to "*become of a woman*," a great fact was present to faith wherever it was; Jesus on earth was Emmanuel,

86 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

God with us ; how blessed the precious memories with all their fragrance of His life of twofold witness on earth, how solemn that "His life was taken from the earth ;" men crucified Him, but God *raised* and *exalted* Him. Then in the risen Lord we find the testimony of *God for us*. But this is not all, He who died and rose again has ascended into the heavens, is exalted at the right hand of God, and having received, *as the exalted Man*, the promise of the Holy Ghost for others, He in the "fully come" day shed Him forth, so that we have now in Jesus exalted and glorified, and the mission and pouring forth of the Holy Ghost by Him from heaven—the great witness to the immense and wonderful fact of *God in us*.

Oh, how little the reality of this fact has laid hold upon the church of God, and even where there is more or less clearness as to the truth of it, alas! how little the living power of His presence in us is known or enjoyed.

Permit me to draw your attention for a little to certain surroundings of the great fact itself. First, let us note that the filling of the material structure with the divine glory was not new, for both the tabernacle and the temple were so filled (see Ex. xl. 33-35 ; 1 Kings viii. ; 2 Chron. v. ; vii. 1-14) ; yet these, though striking in themselves, are as nothing to what is set before us in Pentecost, for now the bodies

THE PERSON AND OFFICE OF THE SPIRIT. 87

of those who have been cleansed from their sins in the blood of Christ, are the dwelling-place of His Spirit.

Further, observe the blessed *contrast* with 1 Kings viii. 11, *there* the divine Presence drove away the priests, so that they could not stand to minister in the presence of the glory ; but now God in His infinite grace makes us *His habitation* !

Again, observe how that in Pentecost we have Babel reversed. (See Gen. xi.) There man had been scattered and his language confounded, there was, as has been said, no brotherhood as it were left in the earth, and all as a result of man having exalted himself, a bold and daring attempt, affecting divine rights ; but now we find all the mournful consequences of this reversed, the second Man out of heaven came and humbled Himself, and being highly exalted, and a name above every name given Him, He had baptised with the Holy Ghost.

I would call your attention to the *form* the descending Spirit here takes, namely, "cloven tongues like as of *fire* : " in the cloven tongues we have the symbol of *diverse languages* and *far-reaching testimony*, and in fire, *grace founded on righteousness*. There can be no doubt that the great point here was *power for testimony* ; it was in the might of this heavenly power that the knowledge of Christianity was to be diffused

88 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

even to the utmost parts of the earth ; if *concentration* was the principle of Judaism, *diffusion* was that of Christianity.

Lastly, let us note the different form which the blessed Spirit took in descending upon our adorable Lord and Master ; we read in Luke iii. 22 : “ And the Holy Ghost descended *in a bodily shape like a dove* upon him.” How blessed to see in this the Father’s seal of His own beloved One, the fitting type of all that the Lord Jesus was in His own precious Person ; the dove, the bird of heaven, the bird of love and sorrow, was the suited form and shape for the blessed Spirit to take in descending on Him. (See also Ps. lxxviii. 13.) And as we follow His lowly, lonely path of devoted service to His Father through this world, we see how in it all He was as under this heavenly dove, the meek and lowly and tender One, passing through all the scenes of human misery and sorrow, the willing servant of every need, soothing every broken heart, wiping away every tear, lifting up every fallen one, yet marked by meek retirement in it all, He did not strive or cry, neither was His voice heard in the streets. Oh that our hearts, as we better know Him now in glory, may more appreciate the precious testimony shewn us in Him whom God the Father thus sealed. W. T. T.

Condensed Notes of an Address, No. 3.

BETHSAIDA.

MARK VIII. 22-38.

WE have considered the first two incidents in this chapter, and I would ask your attention for a little just now to these last two incidents, that is to say, the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida, and the circumstances connected with the Lord's intercourse with His disciples at the towns of Cæsarea-Philippi.

First of all, we have this gracious incident in His life in connection with this blind man, and I think you will see this stamped upon the narrative from the first, that such was the kindness and the goodness of our Lord Jesus Christ in this world that when need came to Him, He never repelled it. He oftentimes withdrew Himself from mere prurient curiosity and the idle gaze of men, but wherever there was need, felt need, and expressed need, in whomsoever it was found, there was the ready answer and the willing and loving response of His blessed heart. And I think you will admit that it was just that which accounts for the constant recourse that was had to Him in cases of distress like this. There was something about Him here in this world that drew the heart to Him. Now when I think of that, when I trace

90 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

those wondrous footsteps of mercy, when I think upon that marvellous grace and kindness to all, even the most unworthy, I cannot help feeling how sadly in contrast with it we are ; I cannot help being impressed with the sense, that we, Christians, are to a great extent repellent, that there is a sort of icy coldness about us, a kind of hard callousness which drives away rather than draws. That is the first great impression that His lovely, blessed grace makes upon the heart with regard to His poor people in this world. We seem to have got His Spirit so little, and to reflect His love so little, and we seem so little to be in His company, and in the atmosphere which marked Him in all His blessed ways here ! It is that thought which impresses itself at once upon my mind when I read the words with which this incident opens, namely, that they brought this man to Him. Evidently the friends of this blind man felt, there is no one for us but Jesus Christ. Do we feel that, friends ? You have got some person blind who is perhaps very near to you—to whom do you bring him ? You have got some case of distress, some case of want or sorrow ; it may not be something connected with yourself, but it is near you. Where do you bring that case ? Have we come so in contact with One whose equal is not to be found, the “One among a thousand,” verily, that

BETHSAIDA.

91

we can say, Well, there is a heart that I can count upon for this distress, and can come to with this misery? I will bring my need, my want, my affliction, to Him. That is what drew these people here, they brought this blind man to Jesus. Oh they were wise in doing it! They did well; they counted upon a love that never disappointed, and a willingness that never refused, and so they come with their burden. That is the way the incident opens.

What does He do? I want you to ponder the little things that are here; there is a sweetness about every word which expresses the ways of our Lord. First of all, He took this man away from all human influence; He took him "out of the town." Let us learn something from that. There is an unhealthy craving for publicity at this moment; people seem to think that they never can do anything except they are under the blazing sun of men's eyes. Ah! I do not see that in Jesus Christ. I see retirement; I see how entirely His whole heart was far away from all that kind of thing amongst men, idle curiosity, human influence; a harmful influence it is, too, man's influence. He took him away from all this. And if you are to be the subject of the grace of the Lord Jesus, you must submit to be removed from human influence and from all curiosity of that nature. This action was just as if He said, I want to have you altogether alone,

92 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

apart by yourself, with Myself. Are we ready for that? Are we ready to be blessed in that way, to get your sight in that way? That is the first action of the Lord Jesus in this case.

But there is another : mark it well, I beseech of you. "He took him by the hand." I do not know a picture in the gospel history that is more affecting to the heart than to see that blessed One taking the poor hand of a blind suppliant for His mercy. He took him by the hand. Oh the grace of it ! Oh the blessed familiarity, as it were, the homeliness, of that dealing ! Is not this a sight for angels and for men to see the Saviour, He who was both God and Man, "God over all, blessed evermore," that blessed One whose like was never to be found, taking the hand of a poor blind suppliant, and leading him just as tenderly and as graciously as you would see any blind man to-day led by his little daughter or his little boy ? These are things that touch the heart, and give us to understand something more of His character who was "God manifest in flesh" down here. "He took him by the hand and led him out of the town." He brought him away from all idle gaze and from all human influence ; He led him forth Himself.

But now mark once more, and look at the verse for an instant further, that we may get distinctly the action before our thoughts. "He

took the blind man," we are told in verse 23, "by the hand, and led him *out of the town.*" Man made the city, the town, the public place, the place connected with all that is of man, his skill and power; He took him outside all the range of that influence, all the deteriorating effects of that influence, "and when he had spit on his eyes"—mark the words, He anointed those eyes with that which came from Himself. I believe that to point to the efficacy of the Person who was there; it was something that came from Himself that was applied by His own hands to those sightless eyes; there is a loveliness about that action, "He spit and put his hands upon his eyes." What was of Himself, with all the virtue that it had, with all the blessedness that is in it, He applied to the blind man's eyes. Do let us take that in, for I believe that is what it sets before us, the personal virtue that was in Jesus Christ Himself, that was applied by His own hands to the sightless eyes of this poor suppliant.

Mark the effect it had; there are two things I earnestly want to bring before you. Do you notice that this cure is a little in contrast with the Lord's usual ways in the gospel history of effecting cures? I have remarked when speaking in this place before, that the characteristic feature of all the cures wrought by our Lord Jesus Christ in this world was the instantaneous

94 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

effect of the exercise of His power, that He spake or He acted and the person was at once cured. Man is very well up in the healing art, but he cannot do that, he cannot effect a state of *whole soundness at once*, immediately, from disease or misery or wretchedness. Here it is gradual, and this is the only instance where it was gradual. This is the solitary exception to the usual presentation of instantaneous power in the actings of the Lord here ; there were steps in it. Now I am going to try and account for those steps for a moment, for I think there was a reason why this was not instantaneous as in other cases, and why it went on from one step to another.

The Gospel of Mark, as we have seen already, is the Gospel of the great Servant-Prophet amongst men, and particularly, I suppose, amongst His own people Israel ; it is the Gospel of service. But I am not altogether contented with merely calling it the Gospel of service, I prefer to call it the service of the pre-eminently great Servant-Prophet. Of course it is the Gospel of service, but it is the Gospel of service of the Servant beyond all servants. Therefore you see service in Mark set forth in its entirety and divine perfection : it is the service of One who, though He was "God over all, blessed for evermore," yet was truly and really Man, and who rendered that service as Man here in perfec-

tion. It is the perfect service of the perfect Servant ; the perfect Servant must render perfect service ; no other can. And therefore when God gives us a picture of what service is, He does it by setting before us the Servant. And we get a better conception of what true service is when we have the true Servant before us.

Now you will observe all through this Gospel of Mark, in connection with the service of the great Servant, that step by step there was a growing rejection of His service, even by Israel and by men ; that they refused the greatest service that ever was rendered in this world. It was not only that they refused His kingly rights ; we have that elsewhere ; but they refused His gracious ministry here, they refused the acts of mercy which he rendered as the true Servant here. And just as there was this growing rejection on the part of Israel and of man, so I see along with it (which, I believe, is inevitable and which always follows) the secondary means come in, and the spontaneous going forth of divine power in human sympathy and human grace and human kindness that marked Him, was chilled by the unbelief and refusal that were found everywhere amongst men where He rendered that service. And hence, I believe, in the very chapter before us, in this very instance, the gradual nature of the cure, and the secondary means employed in the cure. The others were

96 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

instantaneous, as we have observed before ; He spake the word and it was done ; He put His hands upon another case and the cure was effected ; but here it is more at a distance, and it is more intermediate. Now, I believe that accounts for the character and nature of the cure here.

But again, as soon as ever the spittle was applied to the eyes of this man, mark what the effect was. The Lord's question to him, which was the next point, brings out the effect. He asks him if he saw anything. He says, " I see men as trees walking." That is to say, that what he received was a faculty ; he had not yet the power, the ability, to apply the faculty ; he had got here the faculty of sight ; he could see, but it was all confused, " men like trees walking ;" nothing, so to speak, was in its right place ; he could not see anything at all before ; now he could see, but he did not see anything clear correct, right. Now let us learn this, from the incident, how that a man may be born again, but have as yet no power. Power always comes with the Holy Ghost ; and when a person has the Holy Ghost that person has power, because the Holy Ghost is power. I do not believe in what is called a second baptism ; I do not find it in scripture. I find in scripture that if persons have the Holy Ghost they have Him though He may be grieved. I believe that at the root

of what is called a re-baptism of the Spirit of God, lies a grievous error. And I will tell you what it is ; it is shifting the want of power over upon God, instead of taking the blame to ourselves, because we have grieved the Spirit of God. That is the secret of it, and that is a very serious thing. A grieved Spirit of God leaves you powerless, as far as action is concerned. Oh, dear brethren, the Friend within is sensitive. Watch : "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." He does not say, Look for fresh power, or fresh blessing. He does not say, Look for a fresh baptism. He says in effect, Do not grieve that power that dwells in you. If you are a Christian you have got the Holy Ghost dwelling in you. "Live in the Spirit," "walk in the Spirit," cherish the movements of the Spirit, minister to the Spirit, "grieve not the Spirit." Observe how the other weakens all that, and therefore people cry to God to give them new power. If they would judge themselves the power is there.

Now I think we can understand the little lessons that we are learning, from the fact that here was a man who from being blind has got this faculty of sight, but as yet cannot see anything clearly, cannot put things together distinctly ; "men like trees, walking."

The second thing which completed the cure is this : it is lovely to mark verse 25, "After that he put his hands again upon his eyes,"

98 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

the Saviour's hands, the Lord's hands ; first there was *the spittle*, then *the hands*, "and made him look up." Ah ! Jesus never makes you look anywhere else ; man will make you look *within*, he would occupy you with the floating feelings of your own poor heart within ; but Jesus always by His Spirit makes you look up. There is only one place to which His blessed hand will point your eyes, and that is the place *from whence He came* ; thank God we can say, *the place where He is now gone*. He came from it, He dwelt in it in heart and affection even when He was here ; He was "the Son of man who is in heaven" even when He was upon earth ; He was *out of heaven* as He came here, He was *in heaven* when He was here ; He is in heaven now in body. And oh ! where can we go, what place is there, I ask you affectionately worth our eyes being on, except there ? He "made him look up," He put His hands upon him, He connected him with power. I notice that power always turns the eye there ; weakness and self-occupation turn it within ; that is the difference. Power connects you with that place ; power turns your eye to that place ; feebleness is in introspection ; microscopic investigation of your own miserable heart and your own miserable feelings ; the hands of Jesus, the power of Jesus, always lead you up. He "made him look up."

And now we see another word. He "saw every man clearly." It is a very strong word in the original ; in the Greek language the force of the word is, "He saw everything far beaming, far shining, far and near." (τηλανγως) Now he can see everything ; he has got power, he can concentrate his faculties ; he has not only got sight but he can concentrate the sight, the thing is perfect and completed.

And then mark what the Lord says to him. O the blessed retirement of the Lord Jesus Christ ! O the lowly, beautiful path that He walked in this world ! He did not want popularity, He did not seek admiring crowds to come and own Him ; He did not want to be lauded by men here as the great friend of every one's need. "Neither go into the town"—you will only get deteriorating influences there—"nor tell it to any in the town." Do not go into the town for yourself, and do not tell it to anybody in the town for My sake : that is to say, do not you go into the deterioration of human influence ; you have been under divine power, keep away from human influence ; you have been the subject of divine blessedness, now avoid the town. O dear friends, would to God I could warn you as my heart feels I would like to warn you ! The influence of the town is solemn ! You will not think me hard, will you, if I say this—I always feel, O what a

100 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

struggle it must be with the children of God in London to keep out of the influences of a great city like this! There is a kind of influence that it has upon us almost insensibly to ourselves: it is not that we wish it; but it is exactly like the effect of an ill-drained house upon a man that lives in it; he is not conscious of the polluting influence of the gas that is there, yet he is affected by it. So, beloved friends, I believe it is with us; I read a great deal of the town in scripture; do not go into the town, take care of the town. The meaning of it is, beware of human influence and its deteriorating effects upon the soul. And then one word more; "Do not tell it to any one in the town." He did not want to be popularised, did not want the laudation of the crowd, or to pose as a great philanthropist or benefactor of mankind. "Do not tell it to any one in the town;" He sought retirement. Are not the ways of our Lord Jesus Christ here in this world lovely? The Lord help us to gather these things up and learn from them.

Look at the other incident. When He came to Cæsarea Philippi, the first thing I observe in these verses is that He found speculations and opinions rife. That is just what it is to-day; there is plenty of speculation, plenty of opinion, of reasoning and argument. It is a day of speculation. We want to know God's thoughts;

BETHSAIDA.

101

man's opinion is not worth much. It is a wonderful thing to see that there is no subject under the sun that people are so ready to speculate and reason and argue about as subjects connected with the truth of God; and those are the very subjects of all others where their opinions and arguments and reasonings are entirely out of court. I beg to say affectionately to you that we are not competent to form an opinion at all about those things; they are out of your range and ken. It is idle work, and yet people are indulging in it continually every day. So it was here. What was wanting, but what was absent, was just this—faith. And that is what is wanting to-day; alas, there is but little faith. What is wanting is faith in His word. I bless God with all my soul for grace to believe every word that is in that book; be it foolish, weak, senile, contemptible as much as ever you like, I believe every word that is in that book. And more than that—and I am thankful for this opportunity to avow my faith in it—I not only believe what is in that book, but I believe that in the language in which God has been pleased to communicate the subjects that are in that book, He chose the *words* and gave the words to the persons who communicated them. I do not believe that it *contains* the word of God; it *is* the word of

102 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

God. And there is where faith rests. It rests on that which is the word of God. Oh, thank God for that certainty ; I see people positively driven about like leaves before the wind on every side ; they are all adrift, they do not know what to believe, and it ends in their believing nothing at all. Why ? Simply because they have got away from the word. And that is exactly what it was here at Cæsarea Philippi ; opinions, speculations, arguments, reasonings, and no faith at all. There are two circles, you observe : first, the outside circle, "Whom do men say that I am ?" Well, say the disciples, one says one thing and another says another, and no one is right. Then He comes to the inner circle : "Whom do ye say that I am ?" That is a home question, is it not ? Supposing the Lord Jesus Christ were to come into this company to-night and put that question direct to each one of us here, "Whom do ye say that I am ?" Personal, pointed, is it not ?

And now mark ; there is one man here who is taught of God, who has obtained his information, not from his brains, or his intelligence, or his education ; he did not derive it from any human source or from any antiquated medium down here in this world ; he received it direct from God, and his answer proves it. You are the Christ, he says ; you are God's anointed Man, that is the meaning of "the Christ." It is inter-

esting to note, in passing, the difference between this gospel and Matthew in this incident. I believe you get the whole confession given, but one gospel records one part and the other gospel records the other. Matthew records what suits his gospel, Mark what suits his. What Matthew records is, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.". That is what Matthew specially lays stress upon, and therefore you get the very truths that are connected with that revelation to Peter and that confession by Peter. "Son of the living God" pointed to His triumph over death and His resurrection glory; and therefore the Lord unfolds to him then and there the great truth of the church. That is not here at all, because that is not the subject of Mark; that would not be in keeping with the object of the writer of this gospel, though it was in keeping with the object of the writer of Matthew. What was in keeping was, "You are God's anointed Man, the anointed Servant-Prophet of God; you are the Christ." Now the Lord says, The time for that testimony is past, do not tell anybody of it. That testimony was fully rendered, and therefore it ceases now. They had rejected Him; the thing was over; and He falls back upon another glory, a glory that was connected with another title that belonged to the Lord Jesus Christ that is used here, and He speaks of Himself as "the Son

104 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

of man :” He does not say “the Christ,” but “the Son of man” (ver. 31) : “And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.” Now it is the rejection of this blessed Son of man here in this world ; it is His suffering path that comes out ; it is not the revelation of His glory as the Son of God, victor over death, and the founder of the church in its appointed time. No ; here we find His path of scorn and rejection and shame and martyrdom at the hands of man ; they should cast Him out, and refuse Him, and hate Him, scorn Him, and kill Him.

Then the man that was taught of God, the man that had got this divine revelation really, that knew who He was, that said He was the Christ, Peter, His own Peter, “took him and began to rebuke him.” Now, is not that a very sorrowful thing ! Do you know what it came from, what made Peter do that ? The Lord treats it in a very solemn way ; “You are Satan,” “Get thee behind me, Satan.” What was that principle in Peter that led him to that action ? It was inherent worldliness that stumbled over the cross ; it was the unchecked and unjudged worldliness of heart that could not bear the shame that came upon the Master whom he loved. O dear friends, how solemn it is to think of

it! I believe that is one great lesson we learn from this incident. A man may be very sincere, may have true faith, may truly love Christ, and yet not know himself at all, and, as we find here, the flesh within not be judged so as to use in faith the revelation he had got, and to understand the deep meaning of it in Christ's path. That is what affected Peter. Worldliness always shrinks from the cross. Ah! friends, the cross is the test to-day. Talk to people about heaven, or about Christ and His grace and goodness, and they are very glad to hear it; tell them what He speaks of here, tell them of His scorn, of His shame, of His rejection, of His murder by men, tell them of that cross, and they shrink from it. I beseech of you to weigh these things over and look at them. It is very solemn. Do you want to be a follower of Him? I hear people ask that question sometimes, Are you going to be a follower of Jesus Christ? Are you going to be a servant, a true servant through grace in your measure, of that blessed One? Do you long to serve Him and follow Him in this world? Do you want to have your feet in His footsteps? I cannot conceive that any child of God would not say, "I want to have my footsteps down in the footsteps of my dear Lord and Master." Then let me shew you the path now for a moment. We will just read the

106 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

verses, and they will shew it to you ; I do not need to say one word on them (ver. 34) : " And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Who-soever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." I avow to you, I am profoundly impressed with the sense that popular Christianity will not have this at any cost. We are very glad to have the cross for salvation ; how do you like it for your path down here ? You are glad to have it to get your sins forgiven, glad to have it as a passport to glory and as the road to heaven ; do you like it in your path down here in this world, Christ's cross, Christ's shame, Christ's rejection ? People have shrunk from it ; they will not have it. On the contrary, what we find now is that the world, forsooth, is pressed into the service of Christ, and so we have that greatest of all contradictions, and that ugliest of all appearances, a thing called the christian world. Oh read those verses, brethren in Christ, here to-night ; I would put those verses upon our consciences and upon our souls : " If any man will come after me," if you want to follow Me, to have your footsteps down in My path, to be in My circumstances, to be My disciple, " let him deny himself." And that is a great deal more than self-denial ; self-denial is a very good thing, but that is not denying your-

self; many have self-denial who do not deny themselves. To deny yourself is a very big thing. "Let him abnegate himself to death." Let him be out of sight, and kept there, not under the water and out of it again, but under the water and kept there, kept out of sight, unrecognised, unrecognisable; "let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." That is the path. There is no other for Christians, there is no other for those who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. And therefore, as my concluding message to you to-night, I press it earnestly and affectionately upon all our hearts here — Christ's solitary, lonely, rejected, outcast, forsaken, despised, refused, scorned, hated, despicable path in this world, is the path of all that would follow Him. Now is that the path that you and I are on, that is the question? God meets us with it to-night. It is a very easy thing to merely float down with the stream of current Christianity, and there is a certain amount of credit attached to a great deal that is done, a sort of applause, a kind of "well done" from this world; as if it were capable of judging or appreciating anything at all that is of God! But oh! to be hated for Him, scorned and rejected for Him! As the Lord says to that church amongst the seven churches, to that one feeble, weak little company, that just had strength enough

108 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

to keep their heads above water, so to speak, "I know your works;" as much as to say, nobody else would recognise them or give you credit for them: "I know your works; you have a little strength and you have expended it upon Me; you have kept My word and not denied My name." Well, I could not wish anything better for you, beloved friends—and I do wish it with all my heart and soul—that His path might be your path and mine through grace. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

The Lord Jesus Christ grant that His own words may stick fast in our souls to-night, that what we have learnt from this beautiful instance of His grace and goodness here may really be revealed to us by His own power, so that we might more truly and really and whole-heartedly be found in His footsteps and in His path, for His name's sake.

W. T. T.

(Notes of an Address.)



PAUL AT EPHESUS.

(ACTS XIX. 1-20.)

ALTHOUGH the church in its pathway to-day is without much of what was so wonderfully manifested at the beginning of its history it is very encouraging for the Lord's people to remember that they are permitted in these last closing evil days, still to possess at least three vitally important privileges which existed in apostolic times, namely, the *Holy Ghost*, the *name of the Lord Jesus* and the *word of God*. In the scripture above referred to they have special prominence given, and we cannot attach too much importance to them.

We will briefly look at them for our profit and edification. We are there told that when the apostle Paul came to Ephesus, and had set the disciples right, first of all about the question of the Holy Ghost (of whom they were utterly ignorant), he had liberty and power for several things, one or two of which we will enumerate:

1st. In the power of the Spirit Paul *spake boldly* in the synagogue for three months.

2nd. He had power to *separate himself from evil*, and to help the disciples to do likewise.

3rd. A door being then opened in a school-room, Paul ministered for two years, where-

110 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

by all Jews and Gentiles in Asia heard the *word of the Lord Jesus*.

4th. This power could not be imitated, nor the name of Jesus traded upon, so to speak, with impunity, for when the seven sons of Sceva, chief of the priests, attempted it they were overcome by the evil spirit, who said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" they were prevailed against and fled out of the house naked and wounded, and it is then said, "*the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified*, and many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. *So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.*" (Vers. 17-20.)

We are not, of course, now to look for the same manifested power as was shewn when Christianity was set up, but it is helpful to bear in mind that for faith there is found to be no change in the Holy Ghost, the name of the Lord Jesus, and the word of God.

We know that the *Holy Ghost* is the believer's only power for real service, and for leading on, and it is of the utmost importance that we should be kept free from all that would hinder His action in us in the interests of Christ. The *name of the Lord Jesus* is that to which the

PAUL AT EPHESUS.

III

Spirit gathers the saints, so that they may have the guarantee of the Lord's own presence in the midst, for His own words were, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them." We are enjoined to do all *in the name of the Lord Jesus*, and we have an example set by Paul in verse 5 of our chapter.

The *word of God* is our true guide and only authority. It is "quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. iv. 12, 13.) It is the sword of the Spirit.

Paul was filled with the Holy Ghost: he hazarded his life for the name of the Lord Jesus, and preached the word of God. Therefore seeing that none of these privileges are lost to us, well may we take courage. In Revelation iii. 7, 8 it is said to the church at Philadelphia, and for our learning, too, "These things saith he that is *holy*, he that is *true*, he that hath the key of David, he that *openeth*, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an *open door*, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a *little strength*, and *hast kept my word*, and *hast not denied my name*. . . . Behold, *I come*

112 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Beloved, may the Lord in His rich grace be pleased to enable us more to utilise these precious infinite things placed so fully at our disposal, for His own glory and our joy and blessing during the little while it is ours to serve Him, and await His sure return to take us to Himself, to be with Him and like Him for ever!

J. N.

HIMSELF THINE ALL.

His constant care shall shield thy waiting hours,
His love thy solace when the tempest lowers;
Himself Thine all, till that bright morning tide,
When He shall come to greet thee as His bride.

Time hastens on, the midnight hour is past,
E'en now the rays of coming morn are cast,
Thy widow'd weeping shall be changed ere long
To morning praises, and to bridal song.

When not a cloud shall dim thy wondrous sight,
Nor shall His glory be for thee too bright,
Made meet to share it with Him on His throne,
And claim'd by Him as His beloved, His own.

*Copied from the MS. Book of a dear sister in Christ,
recently fallen asleep.*

THE PERSON AND OFFICE OF THE SPIRIT.

No. IV.

WE have had before us the endowment of the Spirit *in fact*, and the *form* in which He was pleased to descend and abide on the Lord Jesus, and on those who had received the remission of sins through faith in His death and resurrection. We also observed certain marked *surroundings* of the great fact itself, and the contrast presented in the effect produced by the divine presence in the Old Testament (1 Kings viii. 11), and on the day of Pentecost, when God in His infinite grace was pleased to make the redeemed *His habitation*. Let us now, as the Lord may be pleased to help us, meditate upon three things which the believer is said to have as the result of the heavenly gift.

First, it is said we are *sealed*. (See Eph. i. 13 ; 2 Cor. i. 21, 22.) Now it is very clear that persons were and are born of the Spirit, but the Holy Ghost Himself coming down and dwelling in those who had already believed on Jesus, putting them consciously in the place in which He was with God, is quite another

114 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

thing; it was the immediate result of the perfection of Christ's work and glory, where there was faith in it, and observe it was no question of experience or a work within, it was *the seal of faith*, and this sealing gives the *intelligence* and *consciousness* of the new position the believer is in before God in virtue of redemption. It has been well put thus—"The sealing of the believer with the Holy Ghost on the ground of his faith in the Person and work of Christ, who has accomplished the work of redemption and sits on the right hand of God, so that he knows the efficacy of that work and his place before God, as a son and in Christ, is a truth as clearly stated in scripture as can possibly be, and constitutes Christianity and the Christian as a present state of things: certainly as to guilt removed, present sonship in divine favour, and joy in hope of the glory of God."

There is another truth brought before us in the sealing with the Spirit, namely, God taking possession of us as His own, it is the mark of His *ownership* of us; He puts his *signature* on what is His. How blessed thus to be His, and to sing—

" Since Thou hast borne sin's heavy load
 My guilty fear is o'er;
 Made Thine by virtue of Thy blood,
 I'm seal'd for evermore."

Next let us consider as to *anointing*, which

THE PERSON AND OFFICE OF THE SPIRIT. 115

is also in connection with the Spirit. (See 2 Cor. i. 21, 22.) I would first say that *sealing* and *anointing* are, I believe, coincident in a sense, sealing being more personal, and anointing having a more general bearing. It is well said that "Sealing is the act of giving the Spirit. I put a seal on a document, and that is the same idea. The anointing was putting oil on a man's head, and it is the general fact that the oil is put there; but the sealing is the effect on the individual. If I say at a coronation, 'The Queen is anointed,' it is a simple fact; but that fact secures her there as Queen. The anointing is a great deal more than the sealing."

There is another very precious feature of the anointing or unction, and shews how the blessed Lord Jesus Christ has associated us with Himself, for it is His own anointing which is the testimony to our being baptised by the Holy Ghost, "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God." (John i. 33, 34.) It is very blessed to recall our own precious Master's words, after His baptism and temptation, in the synagogue of Nazareth: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath *anointed* me to preach good tidings to the poor." (Luke iv. 18.) Further, we find the word used in reference to the blessed

116 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

One twice in the Acts, namely, "Thy holy servant Jesus, whom thou didst *anoint*." (Acts iv. 27.) Again, "Jesus of Nazareth, how that God anointed him with the Holy Ghost and with power." (Acts x. 38.)

It may be clearly seen how that, as another has remarked, "The ceremony of anointing was related to all important offices and ministries of the servants of Jehovah under the old covenant. The priest was anointed that he might be holy unto the Lord. (Lev. viii. 12.) The king was anointed that the Spirit of the Lord might rest upon him in power. (1 Sam. xvi. 15.) The prophet was anointed that he might be the oracle of God to the people. (1 Kings xix. 16.)"

Oh that our hearts may enter into the blessedness of all this, as it is said: "But ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things" (1 John ii. 20); and "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." (1 John ii. 27.)

W. T. T.

Condensed Notes of an Address, No. 4.



“THE MAN CHRIST JESUS.”

CHRIST was a man in the truest sense of the word, body and soul. The question is as to His relation to God as man. We are all agreed that He was sinless. He had true humanity, but united to Godhead. He was God manifest in the flesh. Scripture speaks simply, saying He partook of flesh and blood. That is what the Christian has simply, and as taught of God to believe. . . .

There was the fulness of the Godhead bodily ; and the divine nature was a spring of many thoughts and feelings in Him. This is not the whole truth ; but to deny it is not truth. If it merely means that humanity has not in itself a divine spring, that is plain enough ; it would not be humanity. I am equally aware that it will be said that it was in His person ; but to separate wholly the humanity and divinity in springs of thought and feeling is dangerously over-stepping scripture.

His humanity, it is said, was not *sui generis* (this means of its own kind). This too is confusion. The abstract word humanity means humanity and no more : and being abstract must be taken absolutely, according to its own meaning. But if the writer means that in fact the state of Christ's humanity was not *sui generis*, it is quite wrong : for it was united to Godhead,

118 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

which no one else's humanity ever was ; which as to fact alters its whole condition. . . .

Now that Christ was truly man, in thought, feeling, and sympathy, is a truth of cardinal blessing and fundamental importance to our souls. But I have learnt, thereby, not that humanity is not real humanity, if there is a divine spring of thought and feeling in it ; but that God can be the spring of thought and feeling in it without its ceasing to be truly and really man. This is the very truth of infinite and unspeakable blessedness that I have learnt. . . .

What I see in Christ is man where God has become the spring of thought and feeling. Did He thereby cease to be man? Not at all. It is, though "according to God" in man, and as man these thoughts and feelings are to be found. And this extends itself to all the sorrows and the pressure of death itself upon His soul in thought. He had human feelings as to what lay upon Him and before Him, but God was the spring of it all.

Abstract discussions on the nature of the Lord Jesus are I believe very unhealthful things for the soul ; and if in the form of a positive attempt to define incarnate Godhead—always erroneous in some expression or other.

J. N. D.

Collected Writings, Vol. 15.



"THE HOLY MOUNT."

(MARK IX. 1.)

I DESIRE to bring before you only the first part of this chapter, that is, the magnificent scene of the transfiguration. The first verse properly speaking belongs to the previous chapter. In the last verse of that chapter, which has been already before us, the Lord says: "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." Now I believe that the transfiguration of our Lord was a specimen and example of the coming kingdom and glory and power of our Lord Jesus Christ; indeed, Peter in his epistle tells us distinctly that this was made known, and that it was made known on the holy mount. The light that is thrown upon the transfiguration by the utterances, through the Holy Ghost, of the apostle Peter leads us into what the real object and purport of our Lord was in bringing up His disciples to witness it; and it is that scene I desire to fix your

120 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

thoughts and minds upon during the little time we are together to-night.

First of all, you will notice that the same companions of our Lord who afterwards witnessed His agony in Gethsemane, are the chosen witnesses of His glory upon Tabor. Now that brings together two things that are kept together, and which are blessed for our hearts continually to keep together, that is, the suffering and the glory. The very same chosen witnesses of the glory here were the witnesses of the suffering afterwards. O what different scenes they were! The Lord was the subject of both; He was indeed the central object of both; but think of what a contrast there was between all this transcendent brilliancy of light and glory which shone out from Him even to His raiment on Tabor, compared with all the depths of the loneliness of His agony and passion in Gethsemane! O how blessed to keep both together! And how privileged these disciples were to witness both, to see in the first place the height that He reaches as a man; because that is really what the transfiguration is; He reaches the very highest point in the glory of His manhood on the holy mount. Have you noticed, that with the Lord Jesus Christ as a man here in this world, the path was always an ascending one till this point was reached? Born in Bethlehem, brought

up in Nazareth, His path inclined, He went on step by step in that wondrous elevation that belonged to Him until He reached the very highest summit of glory as a man on Tabor. From that point it was descending; He goes down from the scene where He was glorified, where He was saluted by the Father's voice as supreme in His affections and in His heart, He goes down step by step from the height of the holy mount until He reaches the deepest, darkest depths of Calvary. It is different altogether from the way in which sometimes the Lord's path is presented when we speak of Him as going from the cradle to the cross. Hardly that; He went from the cradle to the holy mount; as man on earth, His path was one of transcendent ascending glory up to that. He reached the very summit of it there, and from that glory He descends. When we think of the close of the pathway of suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ it is very precious for our hearts to take in that it was the Man who was pre-eminently glorified as a man on Tabor, who descended to the lowest depths of Calvary's cross. Now the disciples that witnessed the one witnessed the other; they were the chosen witnesses of His sorrows and of His glory.

But mark how they were introduced to it. We are told in verse 2 of our chapter that "He leadeth them up." I believe, that for

122 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

every sight of this kind, that character of leading must be known by us. It is not only that He leads them, but He leads them "up;" and I believe it must always be so. The reason that we see so little is that the elevation upon which we stand is not divine; we must have the divine elevation to understand all that is connected with the divine. To see the glory of this blessed One we must be led "up." It is interesting that that word "leadeth" is in meaning akin to the word that is used in chapter xxiv. of the Gospel of Luke, after the Lord had made Himself known to those two poor disciples in the tender way in which He did make Himself known to them on the road to Emmaus. The way that the Gospel of Luke ends is very touching and sweet to think of; it says, "He led them out as far as to Bethany." "He led them out." Here it is "He leadeth them up." Those two little words have a very deep significance for every heart that is open to receive them: "up" and "out." "He led them out as far as to Bethany." To get that kind of blessing, we must be "led out." He led them outside of all, so to speak, that pertained to the scene here, to the one spot that was the sequestered home of Jesus upon earth. "He led them out as far as to Bethany," and then "lifted up his hands and blessed them." The Lord grant that you and I

THE HOLY MOUNT.

123

may be led out for that blessing ; I do not believe we ever get it except as "led out." I do not doubt for an instant that there are blessings from God on all sides ; but oh ! there is a special character of blessing which no soul ever gets save as "led out." Are you ready for that ? Are you prepared to put your poor, trembling hand into His, and to say to Him, "Now, Lord, lead me *where* you will and *as* you will, but O lead me out to where this blessing falls." So here the Lord leads them up out of the range of *all human influence* ; He leads them into a high mountain, He gets them above, so to speak, the atmosphere of earth. He gets them outside the atmosphere of the city and of man, He leads them up to a high mountain.

But there is more in the verse even than that. Notice the words, "He leadeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves." I have been so struck with that peculiar action of our dear Lord and Master in every case in which He conferred special and peculiar blessing upon His disciples. And in every case in which He confers the like blessing upon us, I believe that we are made the subject of a gracious leading of Himself outside and apart, into *a holy solitude and loneliness with Him*, apart from every influence. Are not you aware of this, that the blessings so easily spoil, the colour fades so soon ? We need the privacy of His solitude

124 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

to have this continued and fastened deeply in our souls and as well as apprehend it. Hence it is that they are taken up by Him and taken apart by Him themselves ; and there, when all influences were aside and when man and man's contrivances were all distanced, then we get the word, "He was transfigured before them."

Now I would like you specially to notice that this word transfiguration is that which really gives us the English word "metamorphosis." He was metamorphosed. It was a distinct change of the whole form and visage of the Lord Jesus. I believe that it was the brilliancy of light, the divine glory, if you please, that which came from God Himself, but that it worked from what was inward in Him out, even to His raiment. Mark in a very special way notices His raiment. If you *compare* the gospels—do not try to *harmonise* them, they never differed ; you need not try to harmonise friends that were always in agreement : it will yield blessed fruit to you—if you compare Matthew and Luke with Mark, you will find that Matthew and Luke refer rather to His Person, and Mark lays more peculiar stress upon His raiment. Notice the words, for every little word is important in scripture : he says in verse 3, "His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow ; so as no fuller on earth can white them." It is

His raiment to which Mark particularly calls attention. I suppose it fell in with the object of his gospel to display even the exterior of the great Servant-Prophet-Son, to shew the brilliancy and the power of that light, which whilst it burst forth from within, as I believe, yet shed its own bright rays upon every part even of His clothes. And if you keep the thought of each gospel in your mind as you read it, you will find it an immense help in seizing, by the Holy Ghost's ministry, what the purport of each gospel is. Here it is the Servant, the great Servant-Prophet, the Son in sovereign goodness, divine goodness, among people who refused Him and despised Him. Therefore even that which was external in connection with the Lord Jesus, His very garments, reflected the brilliancy of that glory that put into the shade all human splendour.

There is another little thought in connection with the word that is used that I would call your attention to, because it will help you to see the beautiful accuracy of each part of scripture, and the design of the Holy Ghost in inspiring the vessels of revelation in the communications that He made. You will notice when you read the Gospel of Luke that the word "transfigured" or "metamorphosed" is not used at all. Matthew uses it, Mark uses it, but Luke, though he speaks of the fact

126 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

just as the others do, does not use that word. Do you know why? For this reason: it is pretty clear from the internal evidence of the gospel that Luke wrote more especially, primarily at least, for Gentiles, Greek readers. Now the use of that word would in all human probability have connected the minds of those who had been Greeks with the old heathen mythology, and therefore, I believe designedly, that word is omitted. Because there is a design in the omission of words from scripture, just as much as in the employment of certain words of scripture; and therefore designedly on account of those for whom Luke was specially chosen to reveal the mind of God in the gospel entrusted to him with regard to the manhood glory of the Man Christ Jesus, he omits a word which would not have fallen in with the divine thought and mind in the communication of God's will in his gospel; whereas the other evangelists, Matthew and Mark, used it because the readers of their gospels would be under no liability or temptation to be lured away into the darkness and even the vileness of heathen mythology. So far with regard to this word "transfiguration;" and my only reason for mentioning it is that it shews the guiding hand of God, not merely over the subjects of scripture, *but over the words of scripture*. I have said before, and I say it again, and from the very bottom of my soul,

and delight to say it, that I believe as profoundly as that I am in the presence of God, that the *very words* were given to the vessels of revelation as much as the subjects were communicated. It was not merely that they had got certain things to communicate, which we call revelation—revelation relates to the subjects, inspiration to the words—but they got the very words; they were not left to use what they thought the best word in their judgment, they were dependent upon the Spirit for the words. 1 Corinthians ii. leaves us in no doubt with regard to that; “Which things,” says the apostle, “we also speak;” that is the vessels of revelation; “not in the words,” mark you, “which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth;” comparing spiritual things with spiritual, as our version has it; “communicating spiritual things to spiritual persons” is the real meaning of it; cast on God for the very word that would convey the revelation that God was pleased to give them, so that they not merely received directly from Him the revelation of His mind, but they got the proper vehicle whereby to communicate it. I hold, that there is no possibility of escape from it; if words mean anything, 1 Corinthians ii. means that; and if you and I are at liberty to take out of scripture what we think God has put into scripture, to form our own thoughts and opinions

128 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

as to what is of God in scripture, and to reject on the other side what we consider is not of God in scripture, we are making ourselves superior, in what is called our verifying faculty, to scripture. The judge must be always superior to that which is judged ; that which we pass the sentence of our minds upon must of necessity be inferior to our minds, if our minds are to be the discerning power so as to say, This is of God, and that is not of God, or the one is of God and the other is not of God. The truth is, it is all of God, in the subjects and in the words in which the subjects are conveyed. And this very omission here in the Gospel of Luke of the word "transfiguration" is a witness simply to that fact.

The next point here is, who His companions were : not merely who were the witnesses of His glory, but observe, His companions here. In verse 4 we are told that "there appeared unto them Elias with Moses : and they were talking with Jesus." These two were the ancient fathers of the Old Testament ; there was the great heroic law-giver, Moses, and there was the great lion-hearted prophet, Elijah, the typical chiefs of the ancient dispensation. O what a wonderful thing to see not merely the disciples of His love and choice, but to see who of olden times were the companions of this blessed One in this effulgence of His

THE HOLY MOUNT.

129

glory as a man here upon Tabor. Do you think there was distance there? Notice what is said : "They were talking with Jesus." How blessed the intimacy, the holy familiarity of that word ! We talk with those we are intimate with ; we commune with those that are beside us, so to speak, in the same position. This blessed One is pleased to grant this intimacy to these Old Testament saints ; they talked with Him. Do you and I know what that is? I daresay you know those sweet words—

"A little talk with Jesus,
How it smooths the rugged way !"

but do you know what it means? Do you know this holy nearness, so that you can talk with Him? It does not say that He talked with them ; that would not be the same thing : I could quite understand that, but it would not convey to our hearts what this word conveys, "They were talking with Jesus ;" they were in nearness, in intimacy, there was the absence of all reserve, they were outside everything that could check ; they talked with Him. Lord give us to understand the blessedness of talking with Thee.

May I say to you in passing, that you will find it an immense comfort to your heart if you are pressed down with difficulties or trials or sorrows, to have One you can go

130 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

and talk with about it. How many times I have heard the lamentation of many of God's dear people when they have been sorely pressed, and the heart well-nigh burst, and they longed for some one to whom they could speak, and failed to find upon earth one to whom they could tell the depths of their hearts. And you know this, I suppose, it is only to your most intimate friends that you can tell your sorrows; you can tell your joys to anybody, but it is only to those that are close to you, and in all the nearness of affection and intimacy, that you can tell your sorrows.

Now I speak to you in this way because I have no doubt there are many who have—who of us is there here that has not some time or another, and God knows it may be now—some crushing weight of sorrow or trial or some pressure upon their heart. Go and talk to Him about it. O what a reality it is to talk to Him about it! He loves to hear. Talk with Him: find the relief there. You will find what a floodgate that will be to let that bursting heart of yours out to Jesus. He will keep the secret; He will never break faith with you. O how I love to hold a brief for Him in that respect, so to speak, and to plead for Him with you that you might know the blessed, precious relief it is just to go and tell the whole thing out. You cannot inform

THE HOLY MOUNT.

131

Him about anything that He does not know ; but as you talk with Him just like these chosen witnesses of the Old Testament here, your heart will find a solace, you will find a pillow for your aching head and your weary heart. Now just go and unburden it, open it out, and talk with Him as they did. They talked with Jesus.

Now we are not told here, but we are told elsewhere, the subject of the conversation. A wonderful thing to think of ; the subject of the conversation was " His decease." A very remarkable word is used to convey that to us, the word that gives the English word " exodus ;" they spoke of His exodus. He came in and He went out. I love to think of Him going out in that way. One of the Gospels always presents that ; you will be struck with it if you carefully study it for yourselves ; but I believe I am correct in saying that you will hardly find in the Gospel of John the Lord's going out of this world presented in the shape of His death at all. Of course I do not mean to say that it was not really His death, because His death was the way in which He went out ; but the Gospel of John nearly always, and the Lord when He speaks of it Himself too, speaks of it after this fashion : He was going out of the world to the Father ; " When his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father ;" " I came forth from the Father and am come into the world ; again

132 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

I leave the world and go to the Father." And it is lovely to dwell on it in that way ; that was His exodus. He came in and He went out That was the subject here of the conversation in glory.

Now I would like you to think over this for a moment. Is it not blessed to know that the subject of the glory is the cross? And there could be no subject more suited to the glory than the cross of Jesus. How wonderful to have the cross and the glory brought together like that! They spake of His decease, the accomplishment of the exodus that was yet to come. They spoke of it ; there was communion, so to speak, of its kind and up to its measure there between them and Him ; "they spake of his decease that he should accomplish at Jerusalem."

We come now to a solemn part of this scene. While that was in progress, Peter, who was always ardent, always ready, always quick and foremost in everything, makes a suggestion. Notice what it is. I can quite understand how his heart was oppressed with the thought of the transient nature of that converse and the fleeting character of that scene. And it is so like us, so natural to us, to long to perpetuate seasons of blessing ; we long in some human way, to hold these moments of mercy before our eyes. It was a sort of testimony to the little continuity there is in us. "Master," he says, or "Lord,"

“it is good for us to be here ; and let us make three tabernacles.” Do you know what to connect “it is good for us to be here” with? It was a great contrast with the shirking shrinking of his heart from the cross in the previous chapter. In that chapter, which we have had before us, when the Lord brings His cross and His sufferings and His pathway of rejection and scorn before them, Peter shrank from it, in the essential worldliness of a spirit that could not brook the thought that the One he loved should suffer degradation like that. I have no doubt the contrast was strong before him here ; “It is good for us to be here.” It would not be good to have to suffer rejection and scorn and shame with Jesus, but it was good to be in this glory, and good to be outside of that which he shrank from previously. But unconsciously he dishonoured his Master. Verily, it is very wonderful to see how quickly we can pass from one thing to another ! He shrank from the cross of Jesus in chapter viii. because he could not brook the shame of it to be heaped upon One whom he loved ; but here in chapter ix. he himself is the unconscious tool who dishonoured Him. Because observe what he wants to do : he wants to bring Him down to a level with Moses and Elias. “It is good for us to be here ; and let us make three tabernacles, one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. For he wist

134 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

not what to say ; for they were sore afraid." That is so very like Peter. Peter reminds me of a man that rushes into a sentence which he does not know how to finish ; it is like one that embarks upon a journey and does not know what the end of it will be. "Let us make three tabernacles ;" let us perpetuate this glory ; let us keep up this converse ; do not let it pass away ; do not let it be like a wayfaring man that turns aside to tarry for a night ; let us have it here permanently. He did not know what to say, for they were sore afraid.

While that suggestion was being made, and just as it passed his lips, mark the way it is met. (Ver. 7.) "While he spake there was a cloud," "a bright cloud," Matthew tells us, a brilliant cloud, a bright shining cloud, a cloud that was illuminated with the brilliancy of light, a privacy of light which overshadowed them ; it was the shekinah, the visible display of the Divine presence. That is the first answer to Peter's suggestion ; the bright cloud overshadows them. Is not there something very remarkable in that ? God heard Peter's words, the Father replies to Peter's desire, and at once suddenly shows Himself ; a cloud overshadows them.

And not only was there this overshadowing cloud, but mark, "a voice came out of the cloud." You will observe that three times during the progress of His blessed pathway upon earth that

voice was heard ; it was heard at His baptism, it is heard here, and it was heard also as He stood upon the threshold of His passion : in the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of His blessed pathway, the voice from heaven was heard. There is a sweetness about that. O how the Father loved to let it be known what His heart found in His blessed Son ! What was this voice ? First, “ My beloved Son.” O how blessed it is to think of that ! It is the expression of the tenderest and dearest and closest and nearest affections of the Father for the Son. Some one has said, and I accept it, that the moment you come to the expression “ Father and Son,” you touch the fount of love, you get to the source, the great fountain head, of love. I believe it is true. So here the voice from the cloud says, “ This is My beloved Son.” O, He says, I must have him all up for My own heart and My own affections. Thank God, He gives Him out to us ; but He must have Him all up for Himself. His whole heart’s deepest, tenderest outgoings found their answer in Jesus as a man here. I believe it was in connection with His service specially—as the Gospel of Mark is in connection with service—that this beloved Son was the Servant-Son here. “ This is my beloved Son.” Put Moses and Elias on a level with Him ? Put three tabernacles over them to bring

136 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

them into equality? "This is my beloved Son," He says. And now there is another word: "Hear him." Silence every voice, silence every note, silence every song, silence all earth; "Hear him." I ask you affectionately to-night, is that enough for you and me? Are we satisfied, beloved, just with that? Can you in the depths of your soul, and I ask myself the question with you, can we take those words up and use them?

"I have heard the voice of Jesus,
Tell me not of aught beside."

Fine poetry! Is it true? That is the question. That is the Father's thought, at any rate, that is what is in the mind and thought and heart of God; "Hear Him." And that is what He wants us to hear. He calls us apart from this scene, apart from the din and the strife, and the turmoil, and the upheaving and the crashing of all that is round us in this world; He calls us to hear Him. Bend your ears to catch the sound of His voice. "Hear Him." O, what sort of people should we be if we were only better listeners of Jesus Christ! What sort of Christians should we be if only we heard Him! What sort of testimony should we bear in this world if His voice entered into our ears and into the caverns of our souls! "Hear him."

Now look at the effect of it? There is an

effect produced, not only by this cloud, but by this voice, and a very blessed effect too ; and therefore we read, "And suddenly when they had looked round about,"—because it all took place in divine rapidity—"they saw no man any more." O what a mercy it would be if we saw no man any more ! What an exodus that would be if men only retired and Christ only was heard ! "They saw no man any more." Well, alas, we cannot help seeing men until God clears the scene. It is a great thing not to hear them at any rate. "This is my beloved Son : hear him." And thank God there is a moral effect, not a literal one, but a moral effect produced, where Christ alone is listened to, that you will find human sounds and human voices and human thoughts retire. And I believe that as the voice of Christ is heard, that as the face of Jesus by faith is seen, there is a moral retirement from the whole scene, and we walk in sweet forgetfulness ; as another has said, "Too far for some, not far enough for others, but *with Him*." That is the secret of it ; with Him. "Hear him." "Suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves." Thank God it does not say "Jesus only," but "Jesus only with themselves." There was the abstraction of His own blessed presence, and they were, so to speak, absorbed with Him. "Suddenly, they

138 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

saw no man any more ;" all disappeared, the scene was cleared ; no man any more was seen but " Jesus only with themselves."

Now, what a thing it would be for us to-night, if by grace and sovereign goodness we only heard that blessed One, if only we answered to the Father's desire to hear Him, if only we let the sound of His own sweet voice into our ears and into our souls, and made this scene and the strife of it retire from our hearts, and we " saw no man any more save Jesus only with " ourselves ! Do you think we should be losers ? We should be immense gainers ! O the gain, the bliss, the blessedness of it ! Why, it would be just a foretaste of heaven ; it would be heaven begun now ! Because that is what will constitute heaven. People are very fanciful in their ideas about heaven. We go to meet Jesus. If you ask me what heaven is, I think I told you once before and I tell you again, I believe heaven is the place where Jesus Christ is praised and praised for ever ; it is full of the presence of Christ ; it is Christ. You will not find one syllable, not one single word, ever spoken of in connection with it but that. Says the great apostle, whose heart and soul was formed by Christ in this way, " I have a longing, an ardent desire "—for what ? To be at rest ? That is the way people talk. Why ? Because they are

THE CANCELLED BOND.

139

not at rest now. "O to be gone!" Yes, that is to escape out of the troubles and difficulties of the world. Self will hold fast in our hearts as long as it possibly can. Not a word of that do we find in "I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ." "Absent from the body,"—to be out of all its aches, and its groans, and its pains? No; "present with the Lord." May the Lord in His infinite grace give our hearts to taste and know a little of what it is to listen to the Father's voice now. "Hear him." Then we shall find that there is a moral clearance of the scene, and it is Jesus only with ourselves. May God command His blessing, and bring His blessed Christ and fix Him more distinctly and livingly and powerfully in the affection of our souls, for His blessed name's sake.

W. T. T

(Notes of an Address.)

THE CANCELLED BOND.

He gave me back the bond,
 It was a heavy debt,
 And as He gave He smiled and said,
 "Thou wilt not *Me* forget."

He gave me back the bond,
 The seal was torn away,

140 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

And as He gave He gently said,
"Think thou of *Me* alway."

That bond I still will keep,
Altho' it cancell'd be :
It tells me what I owe to Him,
Who paid the debt for me.

I look on it and smile,
I look again and weep ;
This record of His love to me
For ever will I keep.

A bond it is no more,
But it shall ever tell
That all I owed was fully paid
By my Emmanuel.

*Copied from the MS. Book of a dear sister in Christ,
recently fallen asleep,*



THE PERSON AND OFFICE OF THE SPIRIT.

No. V.

WE have been dwelling upon the deep realities conveyed to us by the expressions "*sealed*" "*anointed*," in connection with the blessed Spirit of God; there is another word used in like connection, namely, "*filled*;" only observe that whereas being "*sealed*" and "*anointed*" is God's act toward us, the being "*filled in the Spirit*" (πληρουσθε εν Πνευματι) (Eph. v. 18) is the believer's privilege, and lies on his side in *faith's submission*: it is not in any sense *prayer*, it is in every sense *reception*; the *passive verb* here employed is very suggestive, and seems to point to that which is the true condition to the Spirit's *incoming* as filling. I believe that condition to be, the *constant* mind engrossed, the body yielded as a living sacrifice, and the heart the seat of the affections, submissive, meek, the great Redeemer's throne.

The *effect* of the Spirit's filling is set forth in what follows, even as the effect of wine drinking is said to be excess or *riot* (ασωτια). Do you ask what is meant in simple words

142 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

by being filled with the Spirit, I would say, I believe it to be this, that the Holy Ghost *takes possession* in such wise, and is *the only source according to His energy* of the believer that all else is shut out. How blessed to be so controlled by the Spirit, that we pour out our hearts in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord.

Now it is important to distinguish between the *gift* and the *gifts* of the Spirit: these do not convey the same thought, though they might both be given on the same occasion. The gift of the Spirit is Himself given, the word for *gift* being *δωρεαν*, this is never confounded with *gifts* (*χαρίσματα*), these were *powers* with which people were invested for special purposes; whereas the gift of the Spirit was a *common blessing*, the portion of all who had been washed in the precious blood of Christ.

It is very interesting to the heart to see in what respect the blessed Spirit may be said to be a gift, I would say for two reasons:

1st, as given by the Father, for others, to the exalted, glorified Christ. (See Acts ii. 33.)

2nd, as received by the believer in faith when he has been washed in the precious blood of Christ. (See Gal. iii. 2.)

How blessed to have on the day of Pentecost the very explanation given by the Lord Himself

THE PERSON AND OFFICE OF THE SPIRIT. 143

of all that was taking place there and then, and that too from the lips of His servant freshly anointed with this precious heavenly unction.

Note the one little word, the basis on which it all rests, namely, "*exalted.*" Christ set up on high, after all that had happened to Him below, is the divine explanation.

What could be more sweet to the heart that had tasted His love than to have Himself thus brought before it? And so it is here in Acts ii Peter opens his mouth and delivers a precious sermon on the glories of Christ, as embosomed in scripture; under this anointing he finds *Christ everywhere*; another has so sweetly thus expressed it: "A very blessed thing it is that the Spirit should begin His work by testifying to the glories of the rejected, crucified Christ. Not a word as yet about *grace*; but going into the bosom of recondite scriptures, in Joel and the Psalms, and finding Jesus of Nazareth there—the crucified One, of whom the rabble of the earth had said, 'Crucify him, crucify him'—the Spirit takes up and says, He is the God of heaven and earth. He goes to Psalm xvi., and says David is not in that Psalm; and He goes to Psalm cx., and says, David is not in that Psalm. It is Jesus of Nazareth whose soul was not left in hell. It is Jesus of Nazareth to whom it is said, 'Sit thou on my right hand till I make thy

144 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

foes thy footstool.' It is admirable beyond all thought to find such an opening of a freshly anointed lip."

Lastly, let us notice well here the very intimate connection between the *heavenly power* and the *heavenly object*. The blessed Lord Jesus had said: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me"—it is very evident that this means *of Me in heaven*, and Peter's testimony in Acts ii., shewing us Jesus *made Lord and Christ in heaven*, is supplemented by the fuller revelation given to him whom we may appropriately designate as the apostle from the glory.

May our hearts ever more and more rejoice not only in the heavenly comfort of the blessed Paraclete, but also in His heavenly testimony to Himself, the living One on high in the Father's glory.

W. T. T.

Condensed Notes of an Address, No. 5.



"AS POOR YET MAKING MANY
RICH."

"A WORKING man called on Mr. —, and handed him £88 in notes and gold. Mr. —"

expressed his natural reluctance to take so large a sum from one who had had to work long and hard for it; but the man insisted that 'the Lord had told him to give the money.' A smaller sum was also handed in while we were praying, so that Mr. — was able to announce (lest generous friends should be sending in money, thinking that it would be needed) that the Lord had provided for the expenses. Some days after the mission was over, Mr. — felt continually uneasy about the working man's £88, especially when he heard that this man and his wife were really in need themselves. After special prayer Mr. — was led to send the man and his wife a cheque for £88. He told him he praised God for his having been so liberal, but that the Lord had made it clear to him that now the mission was not in actual need of money, he was to send him back that amount. The man was quite willing to receive it again, being satisfied that he had been used so that the mission might open without money owing."

—*Extracted.*



"BRING HIM UNTO ME."

(MARK IX. 14-34.)

THERE are two subjects in these verses of scripture that I will call your attention to this

146 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

evening. First, there is the scene after the transfiguration, after the glory that He was exalted to upon the holy mount; there is the scene on earth, indeed, there is what we might call earth. We were dwelling upon heaven last week, and I trust through grace we got some little of the blessedness of heaven, the glory of Jesus, the Father's voice singling Him out as the special object of His own ineffable delight, His beloved Son. But in our verses to-night we are in a different position altogether; we are on earth, earth with its discordant sounds, its miseries, its sorrows, its griefs, its heart-breaks, for that is what goes to make up this earth. Do you not know it? Are you not passing through it? Do you not know that in this world death and sorrow are always at home? Ah, friends, we have got to leave it to find where true joys are; they are not here; we have got to leave the place here in spirit and in faith to find the joys that never fade, the place where the sun never goes down at noon; it is where Jesus is. How one's heart enters into the saying of a poor coloured woman that I read of some time ago to one that was in constant distress, and whom in her simple way she tried to comfort. Her heart never was in the clouds and gloom of earth, it was always bright; in her deepest distress there seemed to be sunshine ever in

her heart ; and her owner (for she was a slave) asked her once how it was that she seemed to be so little affected by all the difficulties and trials through which she passed ; her simple reply in her own native way of expression was this, "Massa, it is always bright where Jesus is." O friends, to live there ! Alas ! we too often visit there ; some of us perhaps do not even do that much. But oh ! to live there, to abide there ! Now that is what this scene on earth brings before us ; but I would like to say one word before we look at it together about the Lord's charge after the transfiguration was over, so as to complete what we had before us already.

You will observe in the closing verses after the account of the transfiguration, when the Lord came down from the mount He charged His disciples that they should not speak of those things that they had seen till after He was risen from the dead ; and then we are told that the mention of the resurrection seemed to have been like a piercing sword that went through their hearts. They reasoned with themselves what the resurrection from the dead must mean.

I believe there were two reasons in connection with that charge. First of all, He enjoins the silence which would deepen in their souls the impression of the scene of glory that they had

148 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

just visited. There is a wonderful power in silence; we lose so much by the noise and clamour of sounds either of others or of ourselves. There is an expression in silence far more eloquent than the sweetest notes that ever passed from mortal lips: and I believe He desires to leave, in that enjoined silence upon their hearts, the deep impress of the scene He had passed through. They were not to speak of it; it was to permeate down, as it were, into the very depths of their moral being, until the Son of man was risen from the dead.

But there was another reason, and that was, it was introducing that great subject of the Son of man's rising again from the dead, and it was that which had pierced them through. It was not the mere fact of the resurrection in itself, there would have been no question whatever in their minds with regard to resurrection; every well-taught Jew and every good and pious Jew believed in the resurrection; but it was the fact of *His* resurrection; "till the Son of man be risen." It was not the fact of graves being burst open, or what is called, and indeed very incorrectly called, the general resurrection, for there is no such thought in scripture; I am quite aware there is in popular thought; but we have to learn from scripture. More properly speaking, there is a sectional resurrection: there is a resurrection of the just and there is a resur-

"BRING HIM UNTO ME."

149

rection of the unjust ; but a "general resurrection at the last day," you will not find within God's word. What really touched them and moved them was the fact of *His* resurrection ; and I will tell you why. It scattered the dreamy thoughts of their hearts ; it blasted their illusive hopes that all was to be made good by a living Christ, a Messiah known after the flesh amongst men. That death of His of which He spoke before, which was so abhorrent to their nature, which they stumbled over just as much as some stumble over His glory to-day, that death of His was implied in His resurrection. It slew the living hopes of their hearts, it broke up all their vain dreams, it brought this great fact to them with its momentous consequences, that their Master after all was to die. They could not understand it, they could not conceive such a thing. It threw their hopes the other side. God grant that, through His grace, you and I may so enter into it that it may have the same effect with us, a more real effect than it had with them. The purpose of it was to turn the mind the other side ; and that is where He wants us. His resurrection opens up glories beyond ; it closes all hopes this side the grave, shuts out all expectations this side the tomb, but it opens up vistas of glory, scenes of permanent blessedness beyond. Do you enter into that? Do you appreciate it? Does your

150 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

soul take in that fact? Thank God, our blessings are beyond the grave! Thank God, all that is stable and eternal has been established in the immutable blessedness of the cross, and comes out in all the magnificence of the risen One Himself, in whom we are before Him. There is something exceedingly precious the more we dwell upon it in the fact that everything now comes out in resurrection. You know how you walk through country scenes in the spring-time of nature, and when you see everything ready to burst out, there is something very attractive to the heart in the fresh bloom and bursting forth of life in spring, after the long, dreary winter. Who would go back to autumn leaves, and to the fading scenes, beautiful as it were in death, of autumn? There is a beauty in nature's death, but what is it to the freshness and verdure and blessedness of that which spring pictures for us, namely, resurrection, resurrection out of death and beyond the tomb, the blessedness that is connected with the life beyond. How little it is entered into! Now that was the Lord's purpose, in connection with this charge, to throw their hearts the other side. And I believe He wants to do it now, and we are very slow to let Him do it, and slower still to follow Him. But these two things connect themselves with the charge: first, the deepening of the impression of the scene of glory upon

“BRING HIM UNTO ME.”

151

their hearts ; and secondly, to throw their hearts and expectations beyond the grave to the other side into which resurrection introduces them.

We have got now to the verses we read ; we have left Tabor and we have got down to the bottom of the mount—come back, as it were, into this world. I have spoken to you a little, and I will not dilate on it longer, of the contrast between earth and heaven. That is the first thing that strikes the heart in reading these verses. We must know a little of heaven in order to be able to form the contrast and appreciate it. We do so cling to this earth ; I do not say the world, I am not speaking at all now of the moral character of things, of the moral stamp that is upon all that is here since the rejection of Jesus Christ ; but I am speaking of the solid, literal earth that our feet walk on. We are drawn to it and we cling to it with an awful tenacity ; slow to let go, slow to allow the moorings that tie us there to be parted. We must know something of the joys of heaven, the scene on high, in order to form the contrast. But when we do, when the contrast stands out before us, it is then we are made sensible of what this world is. You know we form our opinion of everything in the way of contrast. There is something bright and blessed and beautiful, and you contrast it with all that is passing and transitory and gloomy ; but you must know what

152 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

you contrast with. And therefore I say we must know a little of those blessed joys to be able to form the contrast with the scene that is here and its sorrows. That is the first thing in these verses.

The second thing that comes before us, and very blessed it is to think of it, is that when they came down from the mountain, and got into this place of distress and misery that is around us here, the countenance of Jesus—I say it with holy reverence—was resplendent with the glory that He had just been in ; His face retained the traces of that glory which He had reached as a man in all its height upon the holy mount. That is what those verses really bring before us, and hence we read, “And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them. And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him”—“did homage” is really the force of the word. They were struck ; there was a grandeur, a dignity, and a glory, that still lingered over that beautiful face. Oh, how little we are up to a scene like that ! Amazement seized them ; the force of the word is “exceeding terror,” “great dread laid hold upon them” when they looked at the reflection of the glory of Tabor still lingering upon that blessed face, as He came down to the bottom of the mount.

"BRING HIM UNTO ME."

153

I do not say for a moment that there were not glories that belonged to Him in His own Person, glories that were specially and peculiarly His own in connection with what He was. But as I was saying last week, He reached this eminence and height of preciousness to God on the holy mount; it was an ascending scale with Jesus Christ from Bethlehem to Tabor, up and up, until He reaches the very highest point, and then it was descending, down and down, to the depths of Calvary. And when He comes back from that scene He still wears that glory, and it was that which struck terror into their hearts. I have been greatly interested in looking at the disciples in the opposite scenes of His life. You will find that in Gethsemane they slept, and on Tabor they were afraid. Oh, how little up to His sufferings and glories we are! We hardly ever seem to be at home in either scene. In His sufferings they slept for sorrow. So do we; it is nature's resource, selfish sorrow, self-consideration, self-ministration. They sought the resource of sleep in their sorrow; on the mount they were afraid, His visage terrified them, the glory repelled them. I think it is very convicting to our hearts to think how little we are up to either of these things. There is one great reason for it. No one could be at home in the glory till the Saviour was there. And He

154 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

must be there as having finished the great work done on the cross ; He must be there as the Man who bore sorrows and griefs and pressure and judgments unutterable, to make that glory a home scene for you and me. It is not the mere fact of glory in itself, but it is who is there. If my Saviour is there, the strangeness of the scene is gone. Is your Saviour there? Is your great and mighty Friend there? Is the dearest object of your heart there? Is your portion there, christian friends? That is the question. If the One who is One among a thousand, who is "chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely" to your heart, is there, the strangeness is out of the glory scene. That is the reason why they were afraid here ; that is the reason why terror settled upon their hearts ; there was no one there who had borne the judgment first. Afterwards it made all the difference. I bring that in because I believe it is a very important point in connection with it. The cross underlies everything ; there must be judgment borne, death vanquished, the grave robbed of its victory, the whole question of sin settled, man as a responsible being ruined and lost, displaced, before our hearts can be at home in the glory of the One that has done it. When it is done, then you will find the contrast. I give you Acts vii. as an illustration of it. There is a man at home in

the glory, in fact he has got no other home. Stones on earth, the hatred and malice and sullen malignity of hearts that could not do anything too much against Jesus Christ, were Stephen's portion ; but he found a home where no stone could ever reach him, he looked up and saw Jesus in the glory of God. You see the contrast at once ; there was a Saviour in glory then. In the scene we are looking at to-night there was no Saviour as yet in glory ; He was on the way to it, He was not in it yet ; and hence they were afraid.

The next subject is His question. He witnessed the disputation that was taking place between the scribes and His disciples, and He asked this question : "Why reason ye with them ?" There was a moral dignity and glory in the putting that question ; and silence meets it ; no one replied ; there is not one that breaks that silence, but at last misery breaks it. I do love to see the way in which misery broke silence upon earth. Here it was a poor broken-hearted father with not only a son, but, as the Gospel of Luke tells us, an *only* son. Ah ! these "onlys" of scripture are very touching to the heart. Here a poor broken-hearted father in the misery and distress of his need, with his only son before his eyes in a sort of living death, a state to which death would be any day preferable, breaks the silence of these

156 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

wretched scribes. I have a most profound contempt for scribes—I believe the world is full of them in principle to-day—they are as clear as the moon but as cold as ice. Look at them in the account of the birth of the Lord Jesus. They had the scriptures of the prophecy at their fingers' ends as we say ; they could quote them, but they had not a bit of heart for Christ. There are people like that to-day, friends, do not be deceived about it. They could quote the scriptures ; it was demanded of them because they were the exponents of the mind of God in scripture at the time, and they quoted it all correctly, too ; I venture to say there was not a prophecy misplaced nor a word out of its true order ; but there it began and ended : what did they care about Christ ? He did not warm up their hearts ; there was no fire of holy love to burn upon any altar to the new-born babe there ; not a bit of it. God keep us from being scribes ; it is a despicable miserable sort of character. Here when He challenges them, there is not a word in reply. But reply comes from where His heart was far more gratified ; reply comes from need and distress. And how many a case there is like it in the world to-night, cases of moral possession. Here is a case of literal possession ; here was a poor child, an only son, afflicted with a dumb devil ; that is to say, a devil who could give sounds, but nothing

"BRING HIM UNTO ME."

157

articulate in them. That is the meaning of "dumb" there, because you will find sounds and cries uttered, but entirely inarticulate. This poor father comes and says, Look upon my child, my son: and then he relates the malignity of the devil, "Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; and whosoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to Thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not." I want you to fix your thoughts for a moment, dear friends, on these two things here; I would to God that we thought a little more of the terrific blinding power of Satan, the malignity of the devil, the sullen malice of a vanquished foe but with the most tremendous power. You little know the power that is exerted in Satanic wickedness in the world to-day. Now along with that, observe the weakness of Christ's own, the inability to grapple with Satanic virus, the inability to use the power which they had so as really to act for Christ in such a scene as this. I beseech of you to think of it. I must say it plainly to you with deep grief, that I believe if there is a picture in God's word which describes more solemnly than another the people of God, it is just that picture; "I spake to thy disciples to cast him out, and they could not." O how solemn it is! Satan's power, Chris-

158 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

tians' weakness, the feebleness of Christ's own! And there does not seem even to be a sense of it: would to God there were. If you saw people lowly and humble and broken-hearted because they were so little able to stand against Satanic power, your heart would have some little cheer; but when you see them elated and heady and self-satisfied and self-laudatory, it just simply breaks the heart. Those are the two things that come together; in proportion to the virus of Satan is the weakness of Christ's own people. "I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not." They had no power.

Now look what follows. There are two things, of which the first I am going to speak to you about is too often passed over. Look at verse 19 for a moment. I do not interpret that verse in the way that people often read it. "He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto me." I see two things there. I do not believe that that was intended by the Lord of life and glory in the least degree as anything like a reproachful chiding of His poor disciples. I do not believe He intended, when He used those words, to send any iron or dart into their souls, however much they deserved it. But what I read in the verse is the suffering, and the grief, and the

"BRING HIM UNTO ME."

159

anguish, and the pain, of the heart of Christ ;
 "O faithless generation." Ah ! it was His own
 heart that was panged and pained. The dart
 went through that tender heart ; as the verse
 of the sweet hymn expresses it :—

"That tender heart that felt for all,
 For all its life blood gave,
 It found on earth no resting place,
 Save only in the grave."

I read in that verse the griefs of Jesus, the pain of Jesus. And it is blessed to see it in that way ; how He was touched, how He felt everything, how He was not unmoved by the circumstances through which He passed, how it entered into Him. In a christian way it will help to illustrate for you a passage of scripture which is full of the deepest blessedness for our souls. It is put strongly in the epistle to the Hebrews ; it is put in a double negative, and you know a double negative is far stronger than an affirmative. It says, "We have not a high priest who is not able to sympathise with our weaknesses." The double negative makes it so strong there, as much as to say, "Thank God, we have a High Priest who is able to sympathise with our weaknesses." Now this verse in Mark helps to cast some kind of light, by way of illustration, upon that beautiful verse in Hebrews. Here were His compassions, here

160 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

was His heart touched and moved with the sense even of the inability of His poor disciples, as well as of the misery that they could not meet.

But now look again for a moment at the last two or three words of that verse ; they are very sweet. If we have the sorrows of Christ, thank God we have the resources that are in Christ. Listen ; “ Bring him unto me : ” think of that ! O brothers and sisters in Christ here to-night, you have had some case of distress or sorrow or pressure or anxiety, you have had some loved object that your heart has yearned over, and you longed to see emancipation for them from the power and thralldom of Satan, and you thought, perhaps, I will take him to that person, I will take him to that man, he is a devoted brother, he is a mighty preacher ; or, I will take her to that sister, she is a devoted woman, a prayerful woman ; and you have gone and have come away heartbroken. Listen ; “ Bring him unto me.” O the blessedness of that ! Let us learn where to take our difficult cases, dear friends ; let us learn where to take our impossible cases, the impossibilities to our hearts, and the impossibilities to the hearts of others. Let us learn the resources that we have in a living Christ, a present Christ, a loving Christ, a mighty Christ : “ Bring him unto me ” He says. Thank God for that word ! The Lord in His

infinite grace give your hearts and mine to enter into the preciousness of it ; " Bring him unto me." Come direct ; failure and breakdown and sorrow all round about, disappointment and vanity all round about, not a green spot, yet thank God Christ remains ; He never disappointed anybody yet ; " Bring him unto me." All I can say in the face of that verse is, we are fools if we do not take Him at His word.

Well, they brought him, and no sooner did they bring him than the devil shews his power more. You may be assured if you want to get anybody to Christ, if ever the devil roared he will roar then. There is nothing that stirs up the fury of the foe, and there is nothing that moves his malignity like getting some one into connection with Christ. You try to bring an object of misery and wretchedness to Christ, and you will move all the hatred of hell and all the malignity of the arch-fiend. It was so here.

There is another little word. The Lord asks a question in verse 21, and I believe there was a deep tenderness in His heart as He asked that question of that father. I believe it was the probing of faith, the trial and testing of the man's faith. " How long is it ago since this came unto him ? And he said, Of a child." Now see the effect here of that little probing by Christ upon the heart of the poor father. He

162 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

says, "Of a child," and then from giving the information he bursts out into a passionate appeal which his broken heart stirred up, and he says, "Ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." That was a little bit more disrespectful in mode than it really was intended; yet, beloved friends, I am bold to say it is far more true, weak though it was, than many a prayer which you hear from the lips of people to-day, because it was real; there was downright reality of heart in it. It was not a made-up prayer—there is so much of made-up prayers, you know—it welled up from the soul of the man who, though weak in faith, still was genuinely true in the bottom of his heart. "If thou canst do anything," he says, "have compassion on us and help us."

Now mark the Lord's reply; "If thou canst believe;" it is a blessed thing that He says, everything is possible to belief. The possibilities of faith are wonderful; I know no limit to them. "If thou canst believe;" it is not a question of My having power, but it is a question of your having faith. See how He brings the thing into its true place, its right position; "If thou canst believe, all things are possible"—I am not disposed to limit that; I thank God, with all my heart for it; "all things,"

not "some things"—"all things are possible to him that believeth." The poor father has the need of his own heart stirred now. It is not merely a need in his affections for his poor son, but now the need of his own heart expresses itself: "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." I do trust you, I take you at your word, I cast myself upon you; but I know I am very weak in it. "I believe; help thou mine unbelief." O beloved friends, to me that is perfectly lovely, perfectly beautiful. There is a moral beauty and a moral grandeur about this moment that is reached in the history of this man that is beyond anything I know.

And now comes the moment of power. When you come to the end of yourself, then comes the moment of power. And this moment of power is grand; there is wonderful glory about it. Look at the difference. There was excitement in the multitude; and that is what you will find in people to-day; it takes very little to excite people; it is an excitable age and an excitable moment we are in. But look at the quiet grandeur, the dignity, the glory of Jesus Christ here. He turns to the devil and He says, "I charge thee," I whom thou durst not disobey, I who have all power over you, I who bound you by My own intrinsic perfection in obedience, and who will break your head in death by-and-by—"I charge thee, come out of

164 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

him, and enter no more into him." That is the moment of divine power ; He spake and it was done. And then the foe shows his sullen hatred again ; for he does come out, he could not do otherwise, he must obey, he must yield, he has met his conqueror ; he does come out, but he leaves the traces of his malignity behind him. And that brings out one other little word here, and it is very sweet ; "Jesus took him by the hand." I love these touches. The very hatred of the devil is the background for the tenderness and compassion of the Lord Jesus Christ. He that commanded something to be given to eat to the daughter of Jairus, He that ordered the restored son of the widow of Nain to be handed over to his mother—I read the same heart here. You know that beautiful little touch in the Gospel of Luke, 'He delivered him to his mother.' There is a sweetness in that ; the raised up son is passed over to the poor widowed mother that had lost the last thing of all she valued in this world. So He stretched out His blessed hand here, and he raised him up. O blessed Jesus, would that we knew Thee better, would that we looked to Thee and that we clung to Thee more !

Now that is the scene at the bottom of the mount, and I pass over with only one word, the Lord's instruction to His disciples as to

their powerlessness. In verse 29 "fasting" ought not to be inserted—you noticed that when I read the verse I left it out—it is a mistake of the translators to have put it in. It occurs in Matthew but not in Mark, and I will tell you why. It says, "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer," that what they lacked was simple, whole-hearted dependence, real surrender of everything for complete dependence upon Him; that was the lesson. And that is the lesson of service, that is what service means; and the Gospel of Mark is the gospel of service. Service is successful where it is dependent, and what awaits power is dependence. "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer."

The last subject is the way the Lord announces in the closing verses His coming passion. And when He speaks of His death as He does, what was to happen to the Son of Man, what He was to pass through, do you notice what is said? They did not understand it, and they were afraid to ask Him. And then a little while afterwards we are told He brought it out from them. "What were you disputing about by the way? what was it occupied your thoughts by the way," He says to them. O, by the way they were occupied with what I am afraid occupies a great many Christians now, which of them

166 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

should be the greatest. Ah ! that comes very home. Many a charmed circle on earth is supposed to be outside the region of that sort of thing is just the very arena of it. Eminence, position, that is what they wanted ; a human elevator to get a little bit high up in this world, that is what was in their mind. Now I want you to put these two things together for a moment. Mark what He says ; He brings in the cross. The mind and thoughts of Jesus were upon the cross. The accomplished decease, the ignominy and the shame that He was to undergo at the hands of man, that is what was in the Saviour's thoughts. What was in their thoughts ? Why, to be somebody ; "who should be the greatest." Do you notice how the two things come together here ? O what a revelation, what a search-light the cross is ! That is what searches us, and finds us out. I know no search-light like the cross : it casts its bright flash on all that is within, sealed and hidden up, and often dressed up in some pious guise and form. That was the awful revelation that came out here ; they were powerless in the presence of the devil, and they were faithless under the search-light of the cross ; and all those awful principles that obtain in the world, ambition, jealousy, envy, variance, emulation, strife, all that was at home in their bosoms and in

"BRING HIM UNTO ME."

167

their hearts. That is the reason why the cross is brought in here. O what a detector! What an exposé! How it scattered their illusive dreams! How it broke up all their cherished projects! O what a revelation of them! These are the things that come to us. I am convinced this is the want, next to being established in the work of the cross, is to have a little more of the cross itself. It is the great need of the moment. Flesh can delight in glory, can talk even of perpetuating it, as Peter did on the mount; he could say, "Let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias;" do not let this be too transitory; the flesh could even find its pleasure in it. But the cross: that is where the rub comes, that is the great detector, the great search-light; it brings out everything. The Lord in His own infinite grace just bring His own blessed Christ and His cross before our hearts to-night, that as we look at Him in all these beautiful scenes we have traversed, the kindness, the sympathy, the pity, the consideration, the goodness of Christ, we may think of all these things. And do not forget that little word, "Bring him to me." I am speaking to somebody here to-night—somehow or other I have a sense of it in my soul that there is somebody listening to me—who has

168 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

some life sorrow, some impossibility. Listen to those words, "Bring him unto me." Remember the love of His heart; remember the pang that went through His breast—"O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?"—I feel your faithlessness; I feel this misery; I feel the wants and pains of the distressed; I feel for the weakness of the church; but the resource is in Me; "Bring him unto me."

I leave that word with you. The Lord in His own grace apply His own word to our hearts this night, and draw us closer to Christ, and give us a better sense of what there is in Him, His infinite resources in the resourcelessness that we find in ourselves: for His blessed name's sake.

W. T. T.

(Notes of an Address.)



THE PERSON AND OFFICE OF THE SPIRIT.

No. VI.

I WOULD now as briefly and as simply as I can bring before you some of the *operations* of the Spirit. Let us guard against the tendency, too common at the present time, to both *separate* and on the other hand to *confound* too much Christ and the Spirit ; I mean, to separate Christ and the Spirit in operation in us too much, and to confound the work of Christ for us with the Spirit's work in us.

Now, the first operation of the Spirit to which I would draw your attention, is what is called new birth, and set forth in detail in John iii. Let us observe how it is introduced. In John ii. we have man set forth on his own side, and also in relation to God ; the wine is out at the wedding feast—" *they wanted wine* " ! What a revelation ! Man's *brightest day* is a failure ; this sad picture is completed in the record given in the close of chapter iv., where we are given the story of the nobleman's son who was sick at Capernaum : all this tells

170 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

us what man is on his own side, how it is with him there ; but we have him also exposed in relation to God in verses 23, 24. Even faith in Jesus, as founded upon a demonstration which could be addressed to human intelligence, was worth nothing. Men might be truly convinced (there were such at that time and there are such still) whether by education or by the exercise of their mind ; but in order to be in relationship with God, there must be a new nature—a nature which can know Him, and which answers to His own. Many believed in Jesus when they saw the miracles that He did (ver. 23) ; they concluded, like Nicodemus, that a man could not do what Jesus was doing if He were not what He pretended to be. The conclusion was perfectly right. Passions to be overcome, prejudices to be laid aside, or interests hard to sacrifice were not concerned in the question. Man's reasons judged rightly enough of the proofs given, the rest of his nature was not aroused. But the Lord knew man ; He knew with divine intelligence what was in him. There was no lack of sincerity perhaps, but what there was with these men was but a conclusion, a human conviction, which had no power over man's will, nor against his passions, nor against the wiles of the prince of this world. "Jesus did not trust himself to them." There must be a divine work, and a

THE PERSON AND OFFICE OF THE SPIRIT. 171

divine nature, to enjoy divine communion, and to walk in the divine path across the world.

Now it is in connection with this that we find the revelation of the first operation of the Spirit; it is *sovereign*, it is *irresistible*. Observe the comparison to the *wind*, and the force of the little word "*so*" in verse 8.

Further, it is well to see the three main aspects of this divine operation.

1. We have secrecy of process, it is an invisible wave or current, and not the keenest sight or wisdom can penetrate or understand it; it is in fact *inscrutable*.

2. We have no thought of man's will in the mystery of the new birth, but entire independence as to it; it is in fact *sovereign*.

3. We have set before us distinct evidence in *result*, illustrated also in the wind; it is in fact in its nature *irresistible*.

This operation, then, is *inscrutable*, *sovereign*, and *irresistible*.

Let us now just simply state what is wrought in this *inscrutable*, *sovereign*, and *irresistible* operation of the Spirit. It is, in the words of the blessed Lord, a being born again, and "this life is a beginning again of life, of a new source and of a new nature—a life that came from God. . . . We receive a new life, which is really Christ Himself in power of life in us, that which Adam innocent had not."

172 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

How blessed, then, this operation. May our hearts take in somewhat more of all that is conveyed through it.

W. T. T.

Condensed Notes of an Address, No. 6.



THE CENTRE OF ALL CHRISTIAN AFFECTIONS.

THERE is a very grave question at issue now in the professing church of God, which branches out uniformly into many collateral points, all of which, though in different degrees, affect Christianity; that is the true nature of Christianity itself. The root of the whole question however is, Where is the bond, the union, the living association between what is divine and men? It takes the form of Popery or Romanism; Ritualism or Puseyism, so called, in the Episcopal body in England and America; the Stahl and Hengstenberg School in Lutheran Germany; and in what is called Mercersburg theology among the Dutch Reformed in America. The last is allied to a new school in Germany, propagating actively its views on the person of Christ; but all, however various the shades of theology, are essentially the same. They all hold union to take place in the incarnation, to be with humanity not (consequent on redemption)

CENTRE OF ALL CHRISTIAN AFFECTIONS. 173

of believers with a glorified Christ ; and without in words denying it, they put redemption entirely in the shade. Redemption in their view, is not really accomplished by the atonement, but by the incarnation It is remarkable how God is set aside in this system, and man, humanity, exalted and made everything of, even in Christ and His work, as far as His work is made of any account. I shall notice some details, but I shall take up the root-question as concerning everyone ; for it is a question of what Christianity is—what the truth is They do not deny that those who oppose their system believe in the Trinity ; in the incarnation ; in the true humanity of the Lord ; in the atonement, in the union of the two natures in one person, in the blessed Lord ; as I myself adoringly recognise all this The person of the blessed Lord is the centre of all christian affections and all christian truth for the believer (and God has given us eternal life in Him—"he that hath the Son hath life ;") as, in God's time, all things will be headed up in Him in heaven and in earth. This is supremely dear to the believer's heart To notice all their errors would be endless. It is the anti-scriptural, anti-christian character of the system, as a whole, which occupies me—"that His saving life exerts its redeeming and restoring power in humanity," and "that the person of the God-man which is

174 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

constituted by the real and true union of the divine and human is the ultimate generic principle of redemption, the generic head of the new humanity." As regards the sympathy of the Lord, on the ground of which His liability to inward temptations, and even His peccability, is insisted on, it fails altogether. For the sorrow and discouragement of sincere souls does not come from the existence of sin in the flesh, but much more from their yielding to it. Now if they are to get sympathy here by Christ being in the same state, He must have failed. But then all is lost. And if not, the whole argument is proved false on its very base. But as I am on this point, I add, they have no true Christ at all. I read, "How such human nature as body, soul and spirit, including a human will, could be held in personal union with the divine, so that this humanity was complete, without a human personality or ego, we cannot understand, but we believe it is a mystery revealed for faith." Where? Why does the blessed Lord say, "Not my will but thine?" Why does He say, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" If there was no ego, no human personality? Why does Hebrews quote, "I will sing praise" and "I will put my trust in Him," "Behold I and the children which God hath given me," if there was no I (ego)? Why does He say "My God and your God, my Father

CENTRE OF ALL CHRISTIAN AFFECTIONS. 175

and your Father" (not our) if there was no personality? I am quite aware of and accept the ordinary orthodox statement of two natures in one person, though what was at first insisted on as orthodox as to *υποστασις* was afterwards condemned, and the meaning of the word changed; but the statements quoted are really Monothelite. It shews the danger of those early discussions, for the simple faith that Jesus was God and man in one person can be easily accepted as plain and vital truth; but the moment you deny personality in the man Christ Jesus, you run into a thousand difficulties and errors. What is really denied is Christ's individuality as a man, as it is in terms elsewhere. And this last remark, that Christ never says our with His disciples, I borrow from a European minister of some note, thoroughly imbued with the German system, where it is at home, not borrowed, and itself spoiled as it is at Mercersburg. And this last statement that Christ had no human personality, no ego, which is really heresy (though God and man were united in one person) and the mere folly of man attempting to fathom the mystery of His person, when He has said "no man knoweth the Son but the Father," is found in the article of one by no means the worst of their doctors.

J. N. D.

Collected Writings, Vol. 29.

Extracts between pages 303 and 364.

ASSOCIATION WITH A DIVINE PERSON.

(MATTHEW XVII.)

THE glory of the transfiguration left no transient mark in the apostle Peter's heart. He had been an eye-witness of the Lord's majesty on that occasion when His power and coming had been revealed in the excellent glory from which the voice came, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased !"

It was, no doubt, a great trial to the apostles to leave the bright and beautiful summit of mount Tabor, and to have to come down again to the plain where they must meet with the troubles, sorrows and opposition of a world which lies in the power of the evil one. To make a poor illustration, I recollect some years ago crossing a spur of the Alps at night, on my way to a meeting, and of seeing the sun rise in the clear air of the mountain tops ; the glittering stars, shining so serenely through the higher strata of air, died out before the splendid sun, and involuntarily I worshipped the glorious Creator, subdued by the beauty of the heavens. It seemed to be a sad thing to be obliged to descend again to this poor defiled earth ; and I left with regret that summit where I could sing, "The heavens are telling !"

ASSOCIATION WITH A DIVINE PERSON. 177

But in this case (Matt. xvii.) it was leaving a far more exalted scene of glory ; the rays of the coming kingdom, of which the transformed Jesus was Himself the Sun, lighted the whole circle of vision, and we cannot be astonished at Peter's exclamation, "Lord, it is good for us to be here !"

The point is that they could not stay there *then* ; they must come down from the mountain, and meet with the very enemy himself on the surface of this poor sin-stained earth. The most blessed truth is revealed at the same time ; that is, if they are to remain in a world of sorrow and opposition, they are none the less associated with Him, whose face shall shortly be seen as the central sun of the Kingdom, and whose divine moral glory is fully known by the voice which declared the Father's good pleasure in Him.

So Peter writes in his second epistle ; and we may take this very descent from the mountain as illustrating our position, that is, as partaking of a calling on high, and of true heavenly blessings ; and then, being allowed to go upon earth as strangers to all around us, but carrying with us the power and grace of the divine Person with whom we are associated.

The prophetic word was confirmed by this most glorious picture of the coming kingdom, and our part in it is that of being in close

178 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

proximity to the glorious Lord, who shall then reign in majesty over all.

And how far is the rest of this passage true for each one of us? Moses and Elias vanish, leaving Jesus alone with those who are called with a heavenly calling. Peter's three shrines disappear from his mind, and he finds himself now with the Lord, face to face with the realities of "life" down here, and face to face with Satanic power. His great thought, in his second epistle, is that we should be so full of the present power of Christ (whilst we wait for the setting up of the kingdom), that we may bring it into all the difficulties of the wilderness.

They could not cast out the demon (verses 19, 20) through their want of faith, or implicit trust in His own divine power; the Lord blamed them for this, but did not fail to have the poor lad brought to Him and healed.

A little further on comes the wonderful story of the didrachms, and the blessed words "for me and for thee," addressed again to Peter, who had made one of his frequent blunders (that of answering "Yes!" to a question too hastily). Peter had been standing up for his Lord's Jewish orthodoxy, and had to learn more clearly what the divine glory of His person really was. The Lord, none the less, associates Peter with Himself and in His condescension, says, "Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to

“MY SHEEP FOLLOW ME.” 179

the sea, and cast a hook” The blessed Saviour, the Lord of glory, the object of the Father’s good pleasure, has been pleased to associate us with Him in His glory, and in all the difficulties of service, till that glory be displayed.

Happy shall we be, if we know how to depend upon the resources of a divine Person till the end of our course here ; that is, till we see Him as He is !

E. L. B.



“MY SHEEP FOLLOW ME.”

(JOHN X. I—II, 27, 28.)

I HAVE sought on previous occasions to set forth the different ways in which souls are hindered from embracing a full gospel.

First, by remaining satisfied with knowing relief only, like the nine lepers (Luke xvii.), instead of coming to Himself, as one of them did, who, when he was relieved, turned back, and fell down at Jesus’ feet, giving Him thanks, and with a loud voice glorified God.

Secondly, from not having learnt the terrible nature of the distance between God and themselves. This must be learnt, and a deep, solemn moment it is, when the soul is brought to see that the only way out of death is by appropri-

180 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

ating the death of Christ. Many are like the large company at Pihahiroth; they are clear of judgment but have not walked through the Red Sea. Then, thirdly, though they know Christ as having died, yet they do not know Christ risen. The simple answer to faith in Christ risen is that you receive the Spirit.

The next step is to *follow the Lord*—"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they *follow me*." Many are truly converted who do not follow Him, for if they followed Him, they would come to Himself outside of everything here.

The Lord had come into the Jewish fold, but instead of remaining there He leads His sheep out of it. The fold sets forth the religious ordinances in the world (what we sometimes call "system"). This detains many, and what they have to learn is to follow the Lord. When we believe His grace we follow Him, and he that followeth Him does not walk in darkness, but has the light of life.

In chapter ix. we get a man who has received light, and he keeps up to it; he insists on what he knows, and therefore he advances. He has not to do with what would be called wicked people, but with the best of society, and each in turn question and refuse him. First his neighbours, then the Pharisees (the religious man); then his parents, who were afraid to

“MY SHEEP FOLLOW ME.” 181

own him; then the nation, the Jews; and in the long run he is cast out; but he goes on following up to the light he has received, and as he does so he is advancing towards Christ. When cast out, he was in the solitude of light; but he was not long there, for Jesus found him, and said to him, “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” And he said, “Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.”

Now he has come to the *Person* outside of all that is revered and respected among men, outside of everything.

Chapter x. explains the position which this man has.

Christendom assumes that room is made in the Jewish fold for Christians; no, “He calleth his own sheep by name, and *leadeth them out.*” The man who had been blind and who had received sight is led out, and here in chapter x. we get his true position, and the position of every one who follows Christ. Many truly converted souls have not come out. Why? Because they have not followed the Lord. If they followed Him, nothing would satisfy them but to find Him. What a moment of exquisite delight when Jesus found him! I ask every converted soul here, would you like to reach him? If you would, you must follow Him, outside all of man, outside all religious impediments. We get it illustrated in the two

182 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

disciples, who left John and followed Jesus. (John i. 37.)

Have *you* followed Him outside of everything and come to Himself? He says, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." There was no pasture in the Jewish fold. The oriental fold was for protection—just four walls built in a square.

I would press on you the blessedness of following Himself. See the touching language He uses: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." Levi (Mark ii.) is an example of this. He left the receipt of custom; he broke away from that which held and hindered him, in order to follow Christ.

Will *you* follow the One to whom you owe so much, or are you stopping short, content with having found merely relief. A faithful dog even will allow nothing to hinder him from following his master. How little our hearts are set on following Him. When you do follow Him, what a moment it is when you come to Himself!—the Good Shepherd, who knows His sheep, and is known of them, as the Father knows Him, and He knows the Father. (See vers. 14, 15.)

Let me draw your heart for a moment to think of what He—the Good Shepherd—has done. He has come from God, and has gone

“MY SHEEP FOLLOW ME.” 183

down under the judgment, and has borne it for you ; “ Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” I ask you, Have you come to Himself? Have you come to the risen One? If you have, you have received the Holy Ghost, and a bond is established between Him and you, and then as a result of this, there is the most wonderful intimacy that can be imagined between you and Him ; as He says, “ I know my sheep, and am known of mine, as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father.”

May the Lord shew your hearts what a real thing it is to have a personal acquaintance with Himself. It is not merely as with Jonathan and David, “ they made a covenant together ;” but He knows me and I know Him. This is the wonderful blessing that the heart finds in having a personal intimacy with a glorified Saviour.

Let me press on you, do not be satisfied with having received light, but follow up the light, and it will bring you to Himself, and an intimacy will thus be established between you and Him. Do you know Himself, and are you in the same kind of intimacy with Him, as that which subsists between the Father and the Son?

If you have not come to this, you have not come to the fulness of grace. If you come to Himself, you receive the Holy Ghost, as He says, “ the water that I shall give him,” and

184 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

this is the power to lead you into a personal enjoyment of Himself, that nothing can surpass. You then know, not only that He has done a work for you, but you know His heart, and "*His love is better than wine,*" so that you can say, "Draw me, we will run after thee." It is only the heart that knows Him that is satisfied. The crown of the gospel is to be acquainted with the Son of God. How souls are hindered and baffled by the power of the enemy from entering into the fulness of grace. Mark, the light that reached you first, came from the glory ; but how few who have received the light have come to Him. If you are not brought to Him, you know nothing of what He speaks of in John xiii., "*part with me.*" The Lord when going away to the Father, washes His disciples' feet, as much as to say, "I shall take care that no shade of reserve shall come in between you and me."

We are brought out of all that would have been attractive to us naturally, and are brought into the sphere where He Himself is, and the crown of all my blessing is, that He is acquainted with me and I am acquainted with Him.

May the Lord lead our hearts not only to see the perfection of His grace, but to pray more, that we may not only have light, but that we may know the Person from whom the light comes.

J. B. S.

THE GIFT OF CHRIST.

IT may be well to notice the different gifts and the different place of each member in the one body, when the unity of the Spirit has been apprehended.

In Ephesians iv. 7 grace is given to *every one*, and this corresponds with verse 16, where we have the effectual working of *every part* in the body.

None are left out ; every member has received grace from the risen and glorified Head of the body ; but at the same time there are special gifts, not given to all, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, which are for the perfecting of the saints.

But the grand fact of all is the present position of the Head of the assembly, and the quotation of Psalm lxviii. is of the greatest importance. The Head is in heaven, full of endless resources for the body, the assembly still upon earth ; let us look at the manner in which the Holy Ghost brings this before us.

Christ is ascended up on high, having led captivity captive, and has received gifts for men (or "in the man" in some translations of the Psalm quoted). That is, Christ, the risen Man, has received the promise of the Holy Ghost for the church (Acts ii. 33), and has bestowed it upon her in the very richest blessing.

186 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Our Lord received the Holy Spirit at John's baptism, and was then anointed with power (Acts x. 38) to go about doing good, healing all that were oppressed by the enemy.

Then, for the second time, and after His exaltation to the highest point in the universe, the Lord Jesus received the Holy Spirit; this time not for His own service, but for that of others. He received, as the glorified Head of the body, infinite riches wherewith to endow the church, while she is here upon earth, walking upon the very territory of the enemy.

Notice that the expression in Psalm lxviii., "for the rebellious also," is not quoted here, for this alludes to Israel.

The point before us is that Christ is in the very highest place, having broken the enemy's power, and that we are on earth; and that all the intermediate space is filled to faith.

I say "to faith," because, no doubt, the expression "that he might fill all things" is not yet fulfilled. The day shall come when the Lord Jesus Christ shall fill the universe with His glory, the glory of the Man of God's counsels, and the church shall be the complement (pleroma) thereof.

But now, I say, the whole space between "the lower parts of the earth" and the highest heaven is filled to faith. The foundation is solid, and though we be walking upon earth

THE GIFT OF CHRIST.

187

(as members of the one body), yet no one can intervene so as to prevent the riches of the gift of Christ coming down from the Head to the assembly.

Precious assurance in a day of great weakness! The Head is the same, His resources are unimpaired, and not even the arch-enemy himself can intercept His gifts.

We recollect, in past history, how the English used to pillage the Spanish galleons in the Atlantic; the ships laden with Mexican silver were intercepted, and Spain's supplies cut off by the daring British sailors—but no one can cut off the supplies of grace which come down from the Head to the members here below.

I will make a further illustration. My point is that the channel of blessing is open, and that no force can close it. Supposing the case (might it never come!) of a future European war. It would be, no doubt, the policy of any antagonist to England to block up the Suez canal, so as to prevent the supplies of trade going through that high road to the East. This would easily be done, for a ship sunk in the passage would close it—but no obstruction can be placed in the channel of blessing between the Head, who once descended into the lower parts of the earth, and is now ascended up far above all heavens.

Let us hold fast the expression in our souls:

188 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

“Far above all heavens.” The power of the enemy is great, his opposition constant, he is the prince of the power of the air, and we must not estimate too lightly his force, craft, and pertinacity; but the Head, the Christ, whose glory and might shall soon fill the universe, is above all heavens. He is far above all the power of the enemy, and we may count upon His love to the assembly, no matter what may be the character of the days in which we are living. The Head can never fail, and our prayer should be that we may look up, high enough, by faith, to that supreme place of glory, whence Christ showers His gifts upon us.

We may, perhaps, leave the character of the gifts for another time, so as to keep before us the grand fact of the Head's glory, power, and supremacy; one thing, however, I would notice, and that is, that it is here said He *gave* (the gifts) to the assembly, for the whole is looked at as an accomplished thing. The whole passage comprises the church's history, “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ.”

The passage is blessedly comprehensive, but this by no means prevents our realising the attitude of the Head in glory towards the members upon earth at the present moment:

“WHOM HAVING NOT SEEN, YE LOVE.” 189

we feel the need of a simple faith, exercised so as to receive His glories and His unfailing grace to the assembly.

E. L. B.



“WHOM HAVING NOT SEEN, YE
LOVE.”

WHEN the affections of the Christian are right they flow in one channel. Thus God said of Israel, “thou wentest after me in the wilderness.” (Jer. ii. 2.) That was in the days of youth—kindly days—when the heart was warm and first love in full play.

The wilderness formed no obstacle to this holy pursuit, for the one object was the Lord Himself.

If He saw fit to lead in lonely and desert ways, if the surroundings were uncongenial, and if there was nought to feed the mere natural tastes and senses, still the heart was satisfied. It went after the Lord, and He proved all-sufficient. Yes, their young days were bright, and how full of honour to the Lord!

And sometimes, beloved, we sing:—

“Jesus, Thou art enough
The heart and mind to fill.”

And as we sing we realise our wealthy portion, and thus furnish pleasure to Him.

190 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Oh ! how grateful to Him in such reciprocated affection ! See how he responded to the yearnings of Mary as she clung, despairingly, to the empty tomb ! “ They have taken away my Lord ” was the heavy plaint of her broken heart, “ and I know not where they have laid him.” Until she knew where He was she could not rest. But the blessed Lord more than met all her deep cravings. He appeared to her in resurrection form, the living Lord, unchanged in affection for His poor desolate people, and called her by name, giving her tidings of the new relationship that now subsisted between Himself and His brethren, tidings which she, first of all, was honoured to communicate to them.

It may be said of her that she, too, went after the Lord in the wilderness. She was first at the tomb. She prevented the morning, and went while it was yet dark to the sepulchre, if, perchance, she might see the form of her beloved Master. Hers was the impulse of love. And shall we blame her for want of intelligence ? Did the Master do so ? Then we may be silent.

He appreciated her love, just as we know He appreciates ours. “ If any man love God, the same is known of him,” and after all, it may be safely affirmed that love makes fewer mistakes than intelligence. When Paul wrote to his warm-hearted Philippians he took notice of their

"WHOM HAVING NOT SEEN, YE LOVE." 191

love, only praying that it should "abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment."

This is instructive. He desired that they should be intelligent, but that their love, instead of being checked, or damped, or decreased in any way, should abound yet more and more.

You can reckon on love being faithful. Win the heart and you have all. The head alone cannot, of course, be trusted. Let the head, the intelligence, be swayed by the affections and you secure devotedness. Let love abound in knowledge. If Mary gave pleasure to the Lord, the Philippians gladdened the heart of His servant Paul.

In each case the affections had the chief place. And would it not be well, in this day of learning and mental activity, this proud and vain-glorious day, if we all sought of the Lord a little more of this inner spring of love for Himself.

Oh! what does He value more than love? "Remember," He said, in words of sorrowful reproach to the church at Ephesus, "from whence thou art fallen."

Their activity was great, and their moral ways blameless; but they had "left their first love." The spring was love.

The youth of Ephesus, like that of Israel, had been marked by faithfulness. Then they

192 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

both went after the Lord. This was welcome to Him, and He bears witness to it. Alas! that in each case He should have to deplore a fall! and that repentance was incumbent on them.

Now, is not the wilderness unfelt when the soul truly goes after the Lord?

Yes, He suffices! His fulness needs no addition, no supplement. Granted only His presence, then dearth is unnoticed.

And if this be true in the experience of the soul individually, it is assuredly not less true in that of the assembly of His people. His presence in the midst of two or three, apart from those accessories which the senses deem so important, eloquence, music, and the like, and, indeed, in spite of their absence—His realised presence is quite enough.

Exercise of soul is required so that His presence may be made good, for “being gathered in his name” is no empty form or assumed privilege, no party badge or conventional rallying-point; but with that exercise His presence, in all its blessedness, is graciously vouchsafed; so that, in thus “going after the Lord,” the richness of the land is enjoyed instead of the weary experiences of the wilderness being felt.

Yes, there are milk and honey instead of weary wastes, and the soul is in the enjoyment of a favour that is better than life.

THE DOLDRUMS.

193

Think, dear reader, what honour you can place on your Lord by such a testimony. With the major part of professing Christians to-day it is the Lord and some form of the world, some addition to Himself—a mongrel Samaritan worship of the Lord and their own gods (2 Kings xvii. 33), a deplorable admission that the Lord is not enough to satisfy, a love of pleasure more than a love of God.

Now, against all this confusion you can bear a bright witness. You can assert, each moment of your life, that you go after the Lord in the wilderness, in a land that is not sown, and that His love sustains and satisfies your heart all along the way. “Christ is all, and in all.”

J. W. S.

 THE DOLDRUMS.

“THE Doldrums is the sailor’s name for the region of perpetual stillness. My experience of the belts of calms is anything but pleasant. I could wish that it might never be my lot again to have to pass through what seamen call ‘the Horse latitudes.’ The oppression of the atmosphere, the electrical disturbances that affected both body and mind, I cannot forget. Then there was the dreadful flapping of the idle sails I asked a helmsman once if he ever fell asleep at

194 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

the wheel, 'Not with the wind blowing,' he said. 'Well, be honest, man, tell me,' I said, 'did you ever fall asleep at the wheel?' and he replied, 'Well, I must confess I did once. It was in a horrid calm like this, there was nothing to do.' I cannot forget the slow progress in the Doldrums, with the shortest runs on record for each day. Alas! for an assembly and for a Christian, who have reached the doldrums, when every current shifts the course, when no breeze inflates the canvas, when the crew grows sleepy and lethargic, and progress is almost imperceptible. These are the times when the prayer meetings are almost as dull as death. These are the times when people fall asleep, literally sometimes, and spiritually always. These are the times when decorum and propriety take the place of desire and of activity. God deliver us from the doldrums!

"From one other place I do desire to be graciously saved. Lord deliver us from *the ice-fields*! It has lately been reported that the North Pole has been discovered by an explorer. Did he think that he was first? I can tell him that a servant of Christ discovered it long ago. 'Are you united in your assembly?' said one to another; 'Oh, yes!' he said, 'United, yes.' 'Thank God for that!' 'Ah but,' he said, 'we are frozen together!'

"It is quite easy to tell, when you are

voyaging, if you are approaching the region of ice. There is a chill in the air that makes the most ignorant passenger go down for his overcoat, and wonder where he is getting to. The prayer-meeting is the thermometer of the assembly. Believe that, and test it, and act accordingly. An assembly from which the fire has gone out has never made me say, 'Lord, let me live amongst them !'

"The scenes of icebergs and iceflows are the scenes of storms, and, strangely enough, of volcanoes. I do not suppose there is an assembly in the world more quarrelsome than the iceberg assembly, for when people have got frozen through sheer inactivity, they must have something to do, so they raise their grievances, and quarrel at their list. How strange it is that some people are never at peace unless they are at war ! As soon as one grievance is done, they would fain have another. What a fearful advantage the devil has of us if we get snowed-up or ice-bound !"

"Satan triumphs when he sees
The strongest saint begin to freeze."

—*Extracted.*



196 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

ALONE.

O die stillen Abendstunden.

O the quiet hours of evening !
Precious, sweet are they to me !
When, the world behind me leaving,
Father ! I commune with Thee !
Then from Christ, my Saviour's fulness,
Power and comfort I receive ;
Priceless are the hours of stillness,
Which to me such joys can give !

Daily cares, the whirl unceasing
Of life's stir, and din, and strife ;
Grudge my soul her brief releasing,
Numb her feelings, crush her life.
E'en the friends I love so truly,
Heavenly impulse seldom give ;
Lesser social joys deprive me
Of the bread by which I live.

When alone a breeze from heaven
Gently cools my wearied brow,
To the thirsting faint one given
(E'en from dear ones, parted now).
'Tis in solitude I gather
Strength in waiting on the Lord,
Learn the blessed " Abba Father ; "
Pondering o'er the faithful Word.

JOH. CASPAR LAVATER,
1741—1749.



THE PERSON AND OFFICE OF THE SPIRIT.

NO. VII.

IN our last we were considering the operation of the Spirit known as the new birth—"born of water and the Spirit." We shall conclude this short series of papers by dwelling upon His blessed work in us. His operation is in the power of life, producing conflict, labour, discoveries of sin, and need of mortifying our members which are upon the earth; and the more all that Christ is is revealed to the soul, the more we find out what we are, and with it the deep need for humiliation before God. It has been well remarked, that "When the fulness and finishedness of our acceptance in Christ is not known, anxiety and spiritual despondency arise, and doubt sometimes issuing in a very mistaken and evil reference to the law—a sort of consecrating the principle of unbelief, putting the soul (on the discovery, by the Spirit, of sin working in it) under the law and its condemnation, and not in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. . . . The Spirit of God judges sin in me; but it makes me know I am not judged for it, because Christ has borne that judgment for me. This

198 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

is no cloak of licentiousness. The flesh would indeed always turn it to this—it would pervert everything. But the truth is, that same Spirit which reveals the Lord, who bore my sins, as having purged them, at the right hand of God, and which therefore gives me perfect assurance of their being put away, and the infiniteness of my acceptance in Him—that same Spirit, I say, judges the sin by virtue of its character as seen in the light of that very glory; and when this is not done, the Father, into whose hands the Son has committed those whom the Father has given Him to keep, as a holy Father chastises, and corrects, and purges as a husbandman the branches.”

Now in John iii., iv., and vii., we find the blessed Spirit set before us, as is said, in His *characteristic living operations*, and the three chapters stand thus :

1. Chapter iii.—He quickens, gives life.
2. Chapter iv.—He is as *given*, a well of water in us, springing up into everlasting life; connected with this, we have grace and riches in their fulness, knowledge of the Father as seeking worshippers to worship the God of love in spirit and in truth.
3. In chapter vii, the blessed Spirit is spoken of as flowing forth from us, “rivers of living water”—heavenly refreshings indeed, connected, too, with His glory as Son of man glorified;

and along with this we have the earnest of glory, the power of refreshing, as well as the blessed testimony that man in Him prevails and has the glory; though yet he must needs be an expectant till He Himself is manifested to the world, then in its true order in that great feast of tabernacles.

There is one point of great moment, to which I would earnestly call your attention, namely, the *individual* nature of the blessing; the words of another set this forth so blessedly that I would, while quoting them, adopt them as my own:

“‘He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.’ Here again you will remark, it is an *individual matter*—the believer’s portion, however it may be ministered. ‘This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet (given); because that Jesus was not yet glorified.’ Now this statement (as I think we shall see) is one of extreme importance, and connected with the whole character and state of the dispensation, except the fact of as being that of God’s blessings, which are beyond all dispensation, giving the Spirit as the power of divine life and worship, inasmuch as they lead into communion with Himself.”

Again, the same writer further says: “I feel

it very important to remark here, *the individual character noticed before, because it is the saving principle in the midst of desolation and evil, whatever common good it may produce*; it is not *they* shall drink of the river from the rock, or drink of some common river, but 'Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water,' it is the personal possession and indwelling of the Holy Ghost. So the Gospel of St. John, which gives what is *essential and uniting, and not consequences*, continually treats it."

May our hearts more and more delight in Him, the heavenly Operator in us as well as towards the world; if we would seek Him out, it must be by His own gracious help in holy scripture, wherein He is set forth as the Comforter sent by the Father and the Son. W. T. T.

Condensed Notes of an Address, No. 7.



MARY MAGDALENE.

(LUKE viii. 1-3; JOHN xix. 25; MATT. xxviii. 61;
JOHN xx. 1-18.)

THAT which is so very apparent in the history of this remarkable woman is her unwavering devotedness to the person of the Lord. With perhaps very little intelligence, indeed she had not taken in the oft-repeated assurance that He would rise from the dead, she possessed an affection for Him which nothing could quench.

Of her it was true : " Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." (Song of Sol. viii. 7.)

And is it not this which the Lord looks for in a day like the present, when He is so much lost sight of and neglected amidst the confusion of many tongues and the presentation of doctrines and dogmas on the one hand, and the dark ignorance of infidelity on the other? Nothing but this can keep us steady and give us confidence at the present moment, and this is set before us as the reward of the Philadelphian and the antidote to the lukewarmness of Laodicea. " I will make him a pillar in the temple of *my* God." " I counsel thee to buy of *me*." It is important to notice how much He counts upon the interest the faithful one will take in all that belongs to Him or is of Himself.

Our first scripture shews the intense relief and deliverance which Mary Magdalene had received from the Lord. He had dispossessed from her seven demons, and had thus delivered her from the complete power of evil. This deliverance was to Mary a very real thing, and henceforth she and all she possessed was at the Lord's disposal, she " ministered *unto him* of her substance." She was not giving for the support of a cause or helping forward a good work. Her motives were higher than

202 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

this. There was *One* who commanded her, she owed everything to *Him*, and henceforth she was not her own, it was *unto Him* she ministered. Gladly, happily she recognised this, and His claims were paramount with her.

Beloved fellow-Christian, we want—nay, the Lord wants more of this in the day in which we live. There is much religious activity, much devotion to a cause, a chapel, a church, a company, a truth, or a system, but where is the Lord? Are we, His saints, set upon serving Himself and being found, like the apostle, “labouring, that we may be acceptable to him”? Does it cost us a little anxiety to discover what suits Him, and what He approves, and are our hearts set upon this?

But our second scripture gives us another picture of Mary. A time has come when the One who has won her heart and captivated her affections is alone. His enemies have prevailed against Him—His own have forsaken Him. Betrayed by “his own familiar friend,” and yielded to His foes, is there no one who will at least shew Him countenance? Where is the impulsive, well-meaning Peter? Where the beloved John? The former, bowed with repentance and remorse, is weeping in secret for his terrible fall; the latter, having received from his crucified Lord His last charge, has taken the heartbroken mother to his own home.

Both are absent now. Suspended between two robbers, mocked, and crowned with thorns, Jesus seems forsaken of all, and from the depth of the thick darkness which enshrouds the scene, comes the solemn and awful cry of desertion. A little company of women stand there. They are powerless, heartbroken, but they can wait and suffer. Mary cannot even at this awful moment desert her Lord. She does not know why all this is taking place, she has little intelligence as to the stupendous work being enacted before her, she has not perhaps taken it in that the suffering Victim is the Son of God; but He has relieved her, He has delivered her from a terrible thralldom, and there is only one place for her—as near as may be to Himself, she is “standing by the cross.”

Shame and ignominy are His portion, and she is not ashamed to be known even at this time as one of His devoted followers. What are shame and rejection to her? It is of her Lord she is thinking. He is suffering, and she must be at His side.

O my beloved brother or sister in Him, think of our knowledge compared with hers. Think of the place of christian blessing and privilege into which *we* are brought, and all the result of *that* wondrous work, and shall we not blush with shame and hide our faces as we think how far, very far, we are behind in devotedness

204 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

to Him. Can we take Mary's place? Can we bear a little reproach and scorn for Him who bore so much for us? May her example stimulate us, for "if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." Was He not in some little measure refreshed by her presence at that solemn moment, and will He forget that she was there?

But we turn now to the last scripture at the head of this paper. Mary had heard the words in which Jesus had commended His spirit to His Father, she waited till all was over and till the Lord of life had bowed His head in death. The precious body was taken down from the cross and laid in the tomb by the loving hands of Nicodemus and Joseph the counsellor, and Mary was there "sitting over against the sepulchre."

The sabbath past, Mary is again, on the first day of the week, "while it is yet dark," at the sepulchre; but what does she find? Early as she is, Another has been there before her. The prophetic words of faith, ascending from the heart of the Son of man to the God of resurrection, have been heard and answered: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." (Ps. xvi. 10.) "He is not there, he is risen." God has raised Him from the dead, and He who laid down His own life has taken

MARY MAGDALENE.

205

it again according to the commandment received of the Father.

The sepulchre is empty, death is despoiled, but as yet the weeping woman only discovers that the body is no longer there. No thought of resurrection comforts her heart, and running from the sepulchre she summons Peter and John with the words, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him." (John xx. 2.) What a blank is the world to Mary. The feast of unleavened bread is in progress, but she heeds it not. To-day the ceremonies attending the presentation of the sheaf of first-fruits to Jehovah will take place in the temple, but Mary will not be there. Her Lord is gone, and there is nothing left.

Beloved, does the absence of our Lord affect us in a similar way? Are our hearts so set upon Himself that His absence from this scene creates a void which nothing but His presence can fill.

The disciples may go away for various reasons to their own homes, but Mary remains at the sepulchre weeping. No place is home to her in the absence of her Lord. She cannot tear herself away from the spot where she saw the precious body laid.

What devotedness! How can it fail to meet its own reward? She sees the angels and they

206 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

inquire the cause of her grief, but they cannot take the place of her Lord. "They have taken away *my* Lord," she says. It is no longer *the* Lord, as she said to Peter and John. Even the beloved John seems not to have been able to enter into the depth of her loneliness without her Lord. Then Jesus Himself draws near. Will He not always do so to such a heart? How can it be otherwise when He "satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness"? The deep longings of her aching heart can only be satisfied by Himself and He takes care they shall be. In answer to His inquiry, "Woman, why weepest thou?" she has only one reply, "Sir, if thou have borne *him* hence, tell me where thou hast laid *him*, and I will take him away." (Ver. 15.) For her there is but one "Him" in the whole world, she does not stop to explain of whom she is thinking. For her—

"There is but that One in the waste."

A poor weak woman, how will she "take him away"? She does not weigh the possibilities of the situation, one thought possesses her—her Lord.

How affecting to our hearts, beloved, and we have so much more to love and bless Him for than she was conscious of at that time. How the Lord's heart was refreshed by her

MARY MAGDALENE.

207

devotedness, and how free was He to make known to her the most stupendous truth yet revealed from heaven, that of relationship to, and identity with Himself, the risen Man, and to make her the vehicle of its communication to "his brethren." "To him that hath shall more be given, and he shall have abundantly." This was fulfilled now in Mary's experience. It was given to her, who had already learned, that now that the Lord was gone, this earthly scene was closed to her and she had nothing left, to receive the first revelation of that new relationship in and belonging to another scene which the Lord could now establish and reveal on the other side of death. "I ascend to my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

Such was the thrice-blessed message from the risen Lord to His sorrowing disciples now entrusted to Mary. It was true that from this moment the earth was closed to them. The place of their Lord's rejection was to be known by them as the place of their tribulation, but at the threshold of this new pathway which they are to tread in their Lord's absence, while they wait for His return, they are given to know that His place of honour and glory, as the risen Son of man in that new sphere into which He has entered is theirs also, His Father and God theirs, and they but wait a little while till His

208 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

return, to bring them practically into all His blessing. Fifty days after, the Spirit from the ascended Lord shall come down, in order to give them the present enjoyment now by faith of all this, and to lead their hearts into communion with the Father and the Son. Thus through that sorrowful pathway which Mary has trod she is fitted to receive this wonderful revelation, the greatest that has ever been made to man, and to be the means of its communication even to Peter and John.

On this truth Christianity itself rests, and it is to be feared that one reason, and perhaps the principal one, why we as Christians so little live to the praise and glory of our Lord is, that few, very few of us comparatively speaking, are prepared, as Mary was, to receive, in the deep affections of our souls, the blessed truths which cluster round resurrection and new creation, and which are intended to detach our hearts from the earth and attach them to Him who is the centre of that new creation scene into which His coming may at any moment usher us. He desires that we may even now enjoy all this in spirit in His company.

Precious risen Saviour and Lord, thou hast brought us into this close relationship with Thyself! Oh, that by the power of the Holy Ghost our souls may enter more into its deep and blessed reality, our hearts may more and more

“THE REPROACH OF CHRIST,” ETC. 209

enjoy His love, so shall our lives exhibit a little more of the devotedness *to Himself*, so marked in the history of Mary of Magdala. J. V.



“THE REPROACH OF CHRIST” AND
“THE REPROACH OF EGYPT.”

(HEB. XI. 26 ; JOSHUA V. 9.)

THE two expressions quoted above, stand intimately connected, in the scriptures in which they are mentioned, with two very distinct scenes ; namely, the former with Egypt, the latter with the land of Canaan. It may be profitable to meditate a little upon the instruction contained in the association of the respective expressions and scenes, for the believer of the present day.

In Hebrews xi. 26 Moses' pathway of faith is specially the subject of the writer. Indeed it may be said that this remarkable servant of God was cradled in faith ; for “*by faith* when he was born he was hid three months of his parents.” Delivered from the waters, and provided for in a marvellous way, the very court of Pharaoh became the nursery of the one who was destined to lead his nation out from under the bondage and captivity, under which they laboured ; Pharaoh's daughter herself was made, under Jehovah's providential dealings, the instrument

210 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

of thwarting the purpose of the sovereign, who through the barbarity of human wisdom, in ordering the death of all male infants, sought to ensure permanently the slavery of Israel. But the day of testing and responsibility came to Moses "when he was come to years." On the one hand, the court of Pharaoh, with all the obligations under which his strange eventful history with Pharaoh's household placed him, and royal affections that were interwoven with that history; Egypt's halls of science too, that bid loudly for his presence and his patronage, and which fully harmonised with his cultivated mind and tastes; for "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds" (Acts vii. 22), pleasures, ease, affluence and luxury too; all of which had, in a marvellous way, become the possession of one who had been born in slavery and degradation: on the other hand, "affliction with the people of God," and "the reproach of Christ."

Weighed by the natural mind there is little doubt what decision Moses would have arrived at: weighed by a heart controlled by God, "the treasures of Egypt," namely, wealth, wisdom, science and a royal connection were lightly esteemed, in comparison with the oppressed people, who were for Moses "the people *of God*," or "reproach," which was "the reproach *of Christ*." Identification with the court of Egypt

“THE REPROACH OF CHRIST,” ETC. 211

and the land of his adoption could only be retained by turning his back upon his fathers' God, and the people of His peculiar possession.

But Moses was fully in the faith of Jehovah's covenant interest in His people; so that their present immediate condition, hopeless and desperate as it was, furnished no obstacle to his faith; for Jehovah had pledged himself, in never-failing promise, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. But to be identified with the God of Israel, and the afflicted Israel of God in the very slightest measure, meant not only separation from all that Moses had been brought up to value and esteem, from those too around whom his natural affections had for long entwined themselves, but to subject himself to the scorn of the people, to whom he lay under so many obligations: hence the full character of “the reproach of Christ” took the form of intolerance of the one, who in any measure savoured of Israel's God, or identified himself directly or indirectly with the despised people of God, in the immediate presence of the Egyptian.

These two alternatives, deliberately weighed, issued in Moses' case in two definite results, namely, in *a choosing* and *a refusing*; affliction with the people of God was emphatically chosen in preference to the pleasures of sin for a season, while the royal distinguishing title of son of Pharaoh's daughter was emphatically refused.

212 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Thus the links with Egypt were at a stroke once and for ever broken ; and Moses definitely identified himself once for all with Jehovah and his interests. Faith's estimate had led up to faith's choice, and faith's refusal ; while the scorn of the cultivated and scientific world of the day, was held to be "greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." Moses' faith formed a practical expression in the course which he unhesitatingly took : for the outcome of faith that is of God, is invariably a well defined pathway and definite practice. "I believed and therefore have I spoken." We also, says the apostle, "believe and therefore speak," while the path and practice of "the cloud of witnesses" in Hebrews xi. was defined for them, separately and individually "by faith." In such a pathway the believer is in a smaller or greater degree identified with God and His interests. But when this is in any measure intruded upon the world's notice, and it is, if faithful impossible to avoid it, its intolerance is expressed in one form or another.

Hence it may be said that "the reproach of Christ" is the world's intolerance of the Christian when a shred or savour of Christ comes out, in word or ways, in its presence.

We may well ask ourselves how far we are spiritually conscious of that which was Moses' surpassing compensation, namely, that such

"THE REPROACH OF CHRIST," ETC. 213

reproach is "greater riches than the treasures in Egypt"?

Turning now to Joshua v., where the second expression at the head of our paper occurs, at ver. 9 we read, "And the Lord said unto Joshua, this day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you."

As has already been noticed, this statement was made *in the land of Canaan, not before* "this day" marking a special point, now reached in Israel's history: they had crossed the Jordan and were encamped at Gilgal.

But the crossing of the Jordan was marked by one characteristic feature at least which was wanting at the Red Sea, namely, the identification of the representatives of the people, that is, the priests with the ark in the cutting off of the waters which were in no sense either waters of judgment, of deliverance, or of separation, as was the Red Sea. A general reference to chapters iii. and iv. confirms this, at verses 8, 13 and 17 of the former, and verse 10 of the latter; while, in particular, verses 15, 16 of chapter iii. identify the moment of the heaping up and cutting off of the waters with that of the moment when "the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water;" while verse 18 of chapter iv. identifies the moment when "the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up unto the dry land," with the moment when "the waters of

214 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before." This contrast between the Jordan and the Red Sea crossing, is clearly defined in the words of Moses on the two occasions ; at the Red Sea, "Stand still *and see the salvation of God*," while at the Jordan, the instructions to the priests bearing the ark were, "stand still *in Jordan*," chapter iii. 8.

Israel was consequently identified representatively at the Jordan, with the whole period of the exercise of the power of Jehovah in connection with the overflowing waters of death. The passage of the Jordan really closed the history of Israel as to their wilderness, as well as their Egyptian experiences, and opened it upon the new scene of promise and blessing in the land.

But there were other features of importance to note as especially characterising "this day" of which Jehovah spoke.

Literally the rebellious nation had died, for the last of those who were involved in the sin at Kadesh-barnea (Num. xiii. 14) had passed off the scene (Num. xxvi. 63-65 ; Josh. v. 4) and had been as really raised up in the generation that followed ; figuratively they had been buried nationally in the setting of the "twelve stones *in the midst* of Jordan," that is, permanently submerged beneath its waters ; also figuratively risen in the "twelve stones *out of the midst* of Jordan," set up at Gilgal. Thus there was

“THE REPROACH OF CHRIST,’ ETC. 215

distinctly the memorial of death, and the memorial of resurrection.

It must be remembered that Jehovah's thought for His people, was, after two years' wilderness experience, to carry them directly into the land, without any crossing of the Jordan, *in the faith* of His power and distrust of themselves. The after 38 years' experience, ending with and including the Jordan passage, was the consequence of their unbelief and distrust in God. Long, weary and painful experimental acquaintance with themselves, “to know what was in thine heart.” (Deut. viii. 2), that is, to effect thorough self-knowledge, because the only alternative, which closed as we have seen with the death and raising up of the nation, and the permanent memorial of that, in the midst of Jordan and at Gilgal.

When the path of faith is interrupted by unbelief, we are necessarily diverted into the painful but salutary path of experimental knowledge of ourselves, which only closes with the spiritual apprehension of death and resurrection as the full and welcome result of thorough self-knowledge.

Lastly the Israelites are circumcised ; that is, the fact of severance is practically brought home to them, not merely tasting the bitter water, as at Marah, but the cutting off of all that characterised the Egypt they had left, and from which they had been severed *for God* at the Red Sea.

216 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Jehovah now says, and not before, "This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you," expressing in these terms, *His* intolerance of the shreds and savour of Egypt, which had so long clung to them.

Thus while the "reproach of Christ" is in its full character, identification with anything of Christ directly or indirectly in the presence of the world, the "reproach of Egypt" is identification with anything of the world, directly or indirectly, in the presence of God, from which alone the apprehension of death and resurrection with Christ can practically clear us.

As the savour of Christ is unpalatable and intolerable to the world, in the believer, so the savour of the world in him is unpalatable and intolerable to God.

Through death and resurrection, spiritually apprehended, the believer is enabled to maintain that which is distinctly of Christ before the world, and refuse that which is distinctly of the world before God; and it is important to note that God does not view the believer as clear of the reproach of Egypt, until death and resurrection have been practically entered upon as accepted conditions.

It is well before closing this paper to turn to the New Testament confirmation of these two points.

In 2 Corinthians xi. 21-27 Paul sums up the

"THE REPROACH OF CHRIST," ETC. 217

result of his ministry as to his faithful savour of Christ before the world, "I speak as concerning reproach," &c., which was characterised, as far as the world's relations to his testimony went, by the unmistakable witness of its intolerance; a testimony, it must be remembered, which flowed out in power, from his own accepted condition of death and resurrection with Christ, as expressed in chapter iv. 10-12.

In Colossians ii. "the reproach of Egypt" is dealt with; where circumcision made without hands is insisted on as the "putting off of the body of the flesh*" by the circumcision of Christ: *buried* with him in baptism, wherein also ye are *risen* with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." The full force of this comes out in verse 20, as being "dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world," though in Colossians this is *applied* more directly to philosophy and ordinances, two of the world's most dangerous and seductive elements, or rudiments. The savour of the world, being no longer that which should cling to the believer in any form, who has spiritually accepted the death and resurrection of Christ as his, he is not recognised as being, before God, "alive in the world."

M. C. G.

* New Translation.



A CHURCH WITHOUT PRETENSION.

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write :

These things saith

He that is holy,

He that is true,

He that hath the key of David,

He that openeth, and no one shutteth,
and shutteth, and no one openeth ;

1. I know thy works.
2. I have set before thee an open door, &c.
3. I will make them of the synagogue of Satan
know that I have loved thee.
4. I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation.
5. I come quickly.
6. I will make a pillar, &c. (him that overcometh).
7. I will write upon him the name of my God, &c.

“He that *hath an ear* let him hear what *the Spirit* saith
to the churches.” (Rev. iii. 7-13.)

LET us briefly examine these seven statements of the Holy One and the True, confirmed by the Holy Ghost, and may many a hearing ear be found in the churches.

1. “*I know thy works.*” (Ver. 8.) The Lord in the midst of His people is fully acquainted with all our works. This statement is found in the seven epistles to the churches, but always with something added in the other six. Here it stands alone. Enough that He knows our works to-day. What is our privilege and responsibility? *To please Him.* “If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.” (Gal. i. 10.) Now is the moment to study to

A CHURCH WITHOUT PRETENSION. 219

shew ourselves *approved unto God*, workmen that need not to be ashamed. (2 Tim. ii. 15.) We may rest assured that if our works in the house of God are approved by Him, we shall not provoke the favourable smile of men. "I know thy works." Surely this should be enough to encourage and stimulate our hearts to devotedness without reserve to His interests, to seek His glory in the midst of all the defilements of an evil day. What could be more blessed on earth than to do all under the eye of such a Master, the Holy One and the True, who weighs all, repays now with His smile, and will assuredly not fail to amply reward the feeblest work of His beloved saints, every one individually dear to His heart, and the purchase of His own life's blood. May we know how to work with and before Him, serving Him diligently, and content to be nothing, out of sight, and disapproved of men, till He come, that He may be glorified.

2. "*Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.*" (Ver. 8.) Whenever we get the word "*behold*" (and it occurs three times in vers. 8, 9), there is always something important to follow. It calls our attention to the thing presented. "Behold, I have set before thee an open [or an opened] door, and no man [or no one] can shut it." The arm of the Holy One

220 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

and the True has opened that door ; what power can withstand Him ? “ He that hath the key of David ” hath opened it for His saints a little while ere He shall take them to the opened heaven. No one can shut it, Satan, demon, or man. The adversaries may be—they *are* many—but none shall *prevail*. The gates of hades shall not *prevail* against His church. (Matt. xvi. 18.) That door was opened wide now many years past ; it is open still. He will keep it open to the end. None shall shut it. Happy he who knows it, and enters in. *Christ is there*, and he finds Him there ; he is at once introduced into His company. His gathered saints are there, and He finds His joy in their midst. And *He* leads their praise. (Heb. ii. 12.) It is a feeble company at best, and the most He can say of them is, “ Thou *hast* a little strength ; and *hast* kept my word ; and *hast* not denied *my* name.” But feeble as it may be, how precious to His heart ! Where the waves of the ever-growing evil of Jezebel, of Thyatira, the ever increasing formalism of Sardis, and the now rapidly developing lukewarmness and self-sufficiency of Laodicea, are daily gathering force, as though they would shortly swamp what little there remains of stability on the earth, the very weakness of *His* twos and threes clinging alone *to Himself*, draws out the deepest grace and sympathy of *that heart of hearts*. And where

A CHURCH WITHOUT PRETENSION. 221

His word has lost its hold, and is attacked, wrested, made of none effect, and denied, and *His name* slighted, dishonoured, and profaned on all hands, what joy to His heart to be able to say of any in the midst of the awful wreck, “*And hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.*” Happy indeed that little company who shall prove at that day to have answered to His mind.

3. “*Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie ; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.*” (Ver. 9.) In our Lord’s day, there were many who boasted of Moses and the law, and the temple of God, but whose awful enmity to the sent One of God, shewed that they were Satan’s synagogue. Alas, how many are like them to-day ! Not a saint on earth who falls back on the pure word of God, and acknowledges practically the claims of the Name of the Holy One and the True, but who finds to his cost a mighty array against him of those who claim to be the privileged people of God, maintaining the law and fleshly worship. Christ followed in the pathway of faith brings out the deep-seated enmity of men’s hearts to the light, especially from those which have been cast in a fleshly-religious mould. But the Lord will soon reverse this state of things. In the coming day the

222 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

now despised saints of God shall be displayed with Himself in public glory, and all pretentious claimants *shall come and shall do homage* before their feet, and shall know that they are the true objects of His wondrous love. *They lie*, and the Lord will compel them to bow before *those who have walked in His truth*.

4. “*Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*” (Ver. 10.) Christ on earth was the godly Man. (Ps. i.) He lived by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God. He, the patient, spotless One, kept the word of the patience of God, and glorified Him in His finished work. He waits in patience to reap the fruit of His victory. *He is our blessed model*. The word of His patience should characterise us. Grace says it of the Philadelphian assembly. *How far is it true of us?* To claim to be Philadelphian is, as remarked by a faithful servant of the Lord, to shew that we are Laodiceans. But to keep the word of the Lord’s patience should be our earnest aim. He will surely recognise at that day all that answers to His word. And because thou hast so done, says our faithful Master, “I will keep thee *from the hour* of temptation,” &c. There will be a Jewish remnant kept *in the midst* of that hour. The saints of this day of

“SPEAK GOOD OF HIS NAME.” 223

grace will be delivered *from it*. The last act of grace working here will be to land them in glory round the throne of God (1 Thess. iv. 15-18); and that, not only ere the hour of temptation arrives, but even before the symbols of judgment are mentioned. (Rev. iv. 4, 5.) This terrible hour of temptation, the great tribulation, shall come upon *all the world*. Alas, *poor world*! The *whole* habitable earth! And those that had nought but the profession of Christ on the lip, but whose hearts were far from Him, and who at that hour shall be dwelling with satisfaction down here, shall be put to an awful test.

E. H. C.

(*To be continued.*)



“SPEAK GOOD OF HIS NAME.”

Do you speak well of His blessed name? What do you know of His name? Is it a name of peace? Is it the “Prince of Peace” that you bear? Oh, go about in peace, create peace. I beseech you avoid the critical spirit, avoid that spirit which is so peculiarly of our own time, that caustic, critical, quizzical spirit which, because it is a little clever—and I think we are all clever in that direction—people regard it as a gift to use. And the young people especially lose all the blessed things of God, all freshness of the spiritual life, because they will indulge in

224 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

the bitter, sarcastic, unkind, uncharitable, suspicious spirit that is so common and so rife in these our days. Therefore *avoid it*. O vessel of the Lord, be brimful of His name, and let it be a name of peace wherever you go. Then everybody shall say, "I am sure he will bring peace, he never makes a quarrel."

Oh, that we might avoid that irritation and provocation that is so common in these days among Christians. Oh, that we would sacrifice ourselves, so that when the thought rises that is bitter and cruel it shall be crucified for Jesus' sake.

C. A. F.



I SHALL NOT PASS AGAIN THIS WAY.

The bread that bringeth strength I want to give,
The water pure that bids the thirsty live ;
I want to help the fainting day by day:
I'm sure I shall not pass again this way.

I want to give the oil of joy for tears,
The faith to conquer crowding doubts and fears.
Beauty for ashes may I give alway :
I'm sure I shall not pass again this way.

I want to give good measure running o'er,
And into angry hearts I want to pour
The answer soft that turneth wrath away :
I'm sure I shall not pass again this way.

I want to give to others hope and faith,
I want to do all that the Master saith ;
I want to live aright from day to day :
I'm sure I shall not pass again this way.—*Extracted.*

“A CHILD IS BORN”—“THE MIGHTY
GOD” “EMMANUEL.”

(ISA. IX. ; MATT. II.)

It is a very significant fact, that the test of every one and everything is Christ ; doctrines do not test in the same way as the Person to whom, no doubt, all the doctrines of scripture relate.

The great question now, as in the days when the Lord Jesus was here, is : “What think ye of Christ?” Thus it is, that here where we have the record of His advent into the world, all classes are manifested in their true character in relation to Him. In Matthew He is presented as Son of Abraham, Son of David, Messiah the King ; hence it is in this connection all through this gospel we ever find Him, and the presentation of the truths found here are ever set forth in this connection. There was a spot on earth—the place of privilege and blessing—a favoured place, the city of the great King. “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Sion.”

226 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Now it was to that spot every eye was turned, wherever expectation was alive in any true heart, it was from thence its hope sprung; hence it is that we find these wise men coming from the far east to Jerusalem, with the language of affection and earnestness saying, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." Thus were their hearts moved by His birth, it is the King of Israel, they come to seek all about Him who has a claim upon them, they leave their own and distant country, guided by His star, if only they can reach Him; this is the first class or company whom His advent into this world brings, as it were, to the front. It is a lovely picture this for faith to look upon. Oh, how Christ *can* engross heart and mind! Does He command ours? How much would we go through if only we might reach Him? Then observe their attitude on arriving at the place where He was—"they fell down and worshipped him"—

"Jesus is worthy to receive
Honour and power divine,"

is in reality the language of their willing hearts; how blessed to see faith at its goal enjoying the prize! Is it not lovely to see how His Person, having won their affections, commanded their

adoration and opened their treasures! They had nothing too costly to withhold from Him, precious as were their gifts—“gold, and frankincense, and myrrh”—He was far more precious still. Oh, what a sight for faith, child though He was here, an infant of days as to His humanity, yet He was their all! He had but just come, yet it was Himself who had come and Himself in person was there before them.

It is lovely to trace in the scriptures how His Person ever addressed the faith and affection of which He was the object; here it was in the first moments of His birth; later on, as we know, in the close of His days on earth and in the face of the hostility and hatred which beset Him, there was found a Mary, who would expend on Him what the Holy Ghost was pleased to call “very costly,” and as she placed it on His body, perfumed the house with its odour. Oh, how at the beginning and at the end Christ was all to faith, whether in the Magi or in a Mary, it found in Him its satisfying portion, and the hatred and violence which marked both the scenes to which we have called attention, could not hinder it in its devotion and affection to Him. Is it so, may I ask, affectionately, with us?

I would not leave this beautiful scene without a word on another subject—truly the centre of all we have had before us. Let me ask

228 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

you to think who is this wonderful Child, whose advent seems to touch and test all hearts? Who but Emmanuel, God with us! He was none less than God manifest in flesh; the mighty God was there. Oh, what grace and love, that He who was "in the beginning with God," was God, should thus come down to become Man! Most affecting it is to dwell in thought on circumstances in which He is here found as having become man: a little child, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger—lowliness, poverty, and rejection are all found in His birth: well may we sing—

"Rich in glory, Thou didst stoop,
Thence is all Thy people's hope;
Thou wast poor, that we might be
Rich in glory, Lord, with Thee."

Again, it is striking to note how from the first moment of His advent He was a sufferer; in different ways and at different times He was such. Oh, how it does appeal to and attract the heart! It is a suffering and sorrowing Christ which does this; in His humiliation He *wins*, in His glory He *satisfies*; His humiliation and His glory are the two great powers which work upon our hearts. Then see how Israel suffers too in connection with Him. "In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping

“A CHILD IS BORN,” ETC. 229

for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.” Oh, what an expression of suffering and death, “they are not” ! What a sense of desolation these words carry with them !

Thus we have looked at, in this first class, the faith and affection which found its all in Himself, and expended it all on Him, and we have also looked at who He was, the Object of such faith and love.

We must now look at the second class we find here, whom His Person and presence bring out. We find then a striking contrast to the Magi in the king (Herod) and all Jerusalem with him ; Herod is a sad character, full of pride, vanity, and worldly lust ; besides he is a foreign king, who is here seen usurping the allegiance of Messiah’s people, while He the true King, owned by the Gentiles, as represented by those wise men, is cast out and refused, His own people being entirely indifferent to Him. Oh, what a sight is here presented in the distress and trouble which His advent brought upon Herod and all Jerusalem ! I need hardly dwell upon the *moral* state here presented. May I ask you how far you suppose things and people now are changed ? Is there any more heart now than then for Christ ? Alas ! the answer is but too distinctly stamped upon the vast scene of profession around, where there

230 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

is no more room for Jesus now than on the morning of His birth.

But suffer me to bring this question nearer to our own doors, and to ask how it is with us in relation to Him? Another has so truly said, that what marked the man who then had possession of the throne of Jerusalem was "victorious love of the world." Now how far are we free from a like influence? Is it not this we have to watch against on every side? Oh, the inroads and encroachments it has made in our midst! We are looking at a moment when Christ was "an exile in Egypt, and then a Nazarene in the earth;" what is He now, may I ask? And what are we in relation to Him and as His disciples in this world that thus hated and rejected Him, and that hates and rejects Him still? Oh, be assured this is the question of questions, *now* as *then* Christ determines everything. How much there is in that name Emmanuel, and what power there is in it to set aside present things: these are surely some of the thoughts the Holy Ghost would press on our souls as we dwell upon this precious page in His history upon earth.

But there is another class represented here, to which I would earnestly call your attention for a little. These scribes are a miserable company; they were conversant with the prophetic scriptures which told of Messiah's birth, when ap-

“A CHILD IS BORN,” ETC, 231

pealed to, they reply at once ; but having said this we have said all : information they had, but no more ; they could tell of His coming, who was Jehovah's Shepherd-King, to come out of Bethlehem, the house of bread ; but their hearts had no interest whatever in Himself.

Oh, what a picture of a heart unmoved were they, no cravings, and longings, and yearnings were theirs, which nothing and no one but Jesus could meet and satisfy ; no desire to see or hear this wondrous stranger-child had they ; if they wished for a reputation for clearness as to the prophetic word, it was theirs ; if they desired to make capital out of their knowledge of the sacred writings, none could dispute their claims ; but no more than this could be said of them, “like lifeless finger-boards they point along a road in which they neither lead nor follow ;” the *place* of the birth of Jesus, and the character of Him who was coming, they can announce, and then settle down into an indifference in which Christ is unnoticed and unknown. Alas ! these scribes of other days are but the prototypes and precursors of those of a like class in this day—hearts where there is neither welcome nor room for Christ, any more than in the inn at Bethlehem.

Oh, how all this speaks to our hearts this day !
I press it earnestly upon every conscience and

232 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

heart ; let us each take it to ourselves as to how we stand in respect to Christ, What is He to us ? What is He worth ? These and suchlike as to Himself are *the questions* of the moment.

There is one word of very deep and precious blessedness in the first chapter of this gospel, and having looked at it a little we shall close our meditations for the present. The word to which I refer is "Emmanuel," which being interpreted is, "God with us." (Matt. i. 23.) What an announcement for any who had heart for it is in such words ; and what an unfolding of the heart of God, too ! Oh, the living grace that would indeed come down and tabernacle among men, so that they should know in very truth, "God with us ;" and not only this, but God among men in the circumstances we have already had before us, and meeting with such a reception at their hands, coming to His own and His own receiving Him not. Oh, what grace and goodness ! Then again, think of the power of that name, Emmanuel, think of its *attractive* power, think of its *displacing* power, has it such with us ? We who know it now in all the endearment which the name of Jesus brings with it to our poor hearts ? If indeed we have heard His blessed voice, is He not able and worthy to make room for Himself, whoever and whatever else would have to stand aside ? May the Lord, by His Spirit, so endear Christ to each one, that nothing

THE RESURRECTION.

233

else will be of any value comparatively in our eyes, that our testimony in *word* and *act* to Him, the true wisdom may be thus expressed.

“It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, and the sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it: and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold.”

W. T. T.



THE RESURRECTION.

(LUKE XX. 27-40.)

THE Sadducees came up to Jesus after the discomfiture of those who had tried the question as to tribute to Cæsar; the word of the Lord had answered *them*, as it answers all those who attack the truth, and now the materialists approached the Lord with no better chance of success than those who had preceded them.

The Sadducees are numerous in the present day, and if we were to listen to them, this is, I think, the sum of their doctrine: there is no

234 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

resurrection; no spirit nor angel ; it is possible to analyse all matter, this has been done, and there is no such thing visible or palpable as a soul, therefore such a thing does not exist. Things will go on until the sun itself shall go out like a huge waning candle, and every living creature be frozen to death through want of light and heat. That shall be the end.

Their question takes that gross form in which very often materialism opposes spirituality ; the case of the seven husbands is worthy of those who deny the resurrection and scoff at it. The scoffing of a materialist is much the same whether at Jerusalem or at Athens. (See Acts xvii. 32.)

But this furnishes an occasion to the Lord to teach important truths as to the resurrection. It is certainly never a sign of being in the right when people scoff at what they do not understand ; this the Sadducees did, but the Lord answered them nevertheless.

We may notice two things in His answer : the first being the entirely new and different order that resurrection brings in ; and the second, the part which it forms of complete redemption.

The new order of those "who are counted worthy to have part in that age" (ver. 35) is very striking. There is a "world" that is outside the range of shortsighted Sadducees, it is on very different principles to the present natural order of things. There are no births, deaths and

THE RESURRECTION.

235

marriages there ; but the happy subjects of the blessing described are equal to the angels,* sons of God, and sons of the resurrection.

An eternal and perfect state beyond the reach of death, in which the redeemed body will be a help rather than a hindrance to full joy and power, for who can imagine the elasticity of the glorified body ? (2 Cor. v. 1, *et seq.*) The title of sons of God, and sons of the resurrection ; dignity, honour and splendour beyond the reach of the enemy. A new world (or age) with a new order of man to people it, where, instead of Heber's :

“ And only man is vile,”

the sons of God, like unto Jesus glorified shall be the chief ornament and crowning beauty of the whole sphere. Ah, how little did the Sadducees know of this !

We may well ask ourselves how much we know of it, for spiritually we belong to it already ; we form the company of the many sons whom God is bringing to glory, and should know in our souls that power of the resurrection that is acting in us by the Holy Ghost, the same power by which Jesus was raised from the dead.

The second part of our Lord's answer is none

* Notice this very remarkable expression (*ἰσαγγελοι*) ; it is in connection with an immortal, incorruptible state of things, very different from the present.

236 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

the less to be noted : " But that the dead rise even Moses when he called Jehovah, the God of Abraham, etc."

All live unto Him. The very fact of His being called the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, at the burning bush, implies full redemption, and final resurrection of the patriarchs' bodies. If Jehovah spoke of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as living, it was certain that their bodies should rise, for " Abraham " does not merely mean " the soul of Abraham," but the man entirely redeemed (body and soul).

There is a detailed statement here of the relations of the living God with each one of His living saints, for He is called : " The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." There is nothing more blessed in connection with the resurrection than the personal relationship with Him who alone can create and raise from the dead, and who shall call forth from mortality and corruption the body of each of His saints, in order to make it a fit and glorious vessel of the soul for all eternity.

" Unclothed " is merely a transitional state for waiting saints, and ere long we shall see the whole company of the redeemed in all the complete beauty of the new creation. E. L. B.



DANGERS IN A DAY OF RUIN.

IT has often been remarked, that we find the house of God in order in the first Epistle of Timothy, and guidance in the second in a day of disorder, and departure from the truth. Now, being in that day, it is well to be fully alive to the dangers to which we are exposed in such a state of things ; and God has not only clearly depicted what these dangers are, but we find also the names of those who were leaders in the departure in the days of the apostle, brought forward as warnings at all times for the saints of God. In the first Epistle, the house of God, which is the church of the living God, is presented as the pillar and ground of *the truth*. (1 Tim. iii. 15.) And more or less all through the second, the Holy Ghost reminds us of the importance of *the truth* and its maintenance, notwithstanding the ruin and confusion. (2 Tim. ii. 15, 18, 25 ; iii. 7, 8 ; iv. 4.)

In 2 Timothy i. 15, the apostle would have Timothy, his son in the faith, know that "all they which are in Asia be turned away from me, of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes." Turned away *from me*. He does not say *from Christ*, though, as he was teaching and following Christ, of necessity there must have been some measure of departure from Him also. But,

238 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF

though still professing to maintain the doctrine of Christ, they all turned away from him who was His chief witness. Paul always fought for *the whole truth*, and on *the highest lines*, and his *manner of life* was consistent with his doctrine. (2 Tim. iii. 10.) The truth was heavenly, and the path narrow. Only faith, in the power of the Holy Ghost, could enter into the one and pursue the other. *All* they in Asia broke down. They appear to have accepted it at starting; how far in power we are not told. But time tested, as doubtless the reproach was great, and it was a day of persecution; and they all turned away. Phygellus and Hermogenes were probably leaders in the mischief, as their names are brought forward. How grave the responsibility of all who mislead the saints of God; and how sorrowful above all for them, as well as for the misled in the day of reckoning at the judgment seat of Christ! (1 Cor. iii. 10-18.)

In chapter ii. 16, the apostle warns Timothy, saying, "Shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness: and their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenæus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some." Here we meet with a second form of evil, the denial of an important truth of the gospel, which

DANGERS IN A DAY OF RUIN. 239

if followed out to its full consequences, must produce endless confusion in the minds of the saints. The apostle does not spare. He calls such erroneous teaching profane and vain babblings, whose product is increasing ungodliness, and compares it to the gnawing of that deadly disease, canker or gangrene. And again he brings forward the name of two, who appear to have led in this wickedness, Hymenæus and Philetus. It is to be remarked how these misleaders go in pairs; it is natural for a man lapsing into error to seek a companion. Two witnesses are sufficient for the truth according to God. Satan imitates. There never was a day in the history of the church when God's people needed more to be on the alert as to bad doctrine. Cankorous doctrines abound, and are on the increase. Our safeguard is God's sure word. We are only *sure of the truth* in its precious page.

In chapter iii. 1-9, we have a further development, the characteristics of the last days. The apostle may well call them perilous or difficult times, as he introduces such a long list of the evil persons who have sheltered within the sphere of God's house. We are undoubtedly in those difficult times, and difficult indeed it is, and increasingly so to walk with God in integrity and purity, separate from the evil. Yet is His grace sufficient.

240 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Now *of this sort*, as described in verses 2-5, are they which creep into houses, and lead others captive, &c. (Vers. 6-7.) No leaders' names are given here, but the class guilty of this conduct are compared to two of old, whose names, withheld in the old Testament, are now brought forward, as having acted in a similar way towards Moses, as these to-day. Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses. And these *resist the truth*. They withstood by *imitation*, supported by Satanic power. Nothing paralyses the faithful to day and the spreading of *the truth* more than the vast imitation on all hands in Christendom. But the two Egyptians broke down, when it came to the imitation of the production of life. (Ex. viii. 16-19.) And here is the great lack in Christless Christendom. A name to live, and yet dead, is what specially characterises formal Protestantism. (Rev. iii. 1.) *Life* is conspicuous by its absence in the mass. Eternal life is shorn of its heavenly character (John iii. 12-16); by many confused with other truths; and often supposed erroneously to be conferred by water baptism, or in partaking of the Lord's supper. The believer has this life *in Christ Jesus*, risen from the dead. We are reminded no less than seven times in this second Epistle that the whole blessing is *in Him*. (Chap. i. 1, 9, 13; ii. 1, 10; iii. 12, 15.) And it is in living in the power of this blessed truth, that we rise superior to the

DANGERS IN A DAY OF RUIN. 241

evil in God's house, are content to suffer, and are preserved through grace from every attack of the foe.

In chapter iv. two other dangers are referred to. In verse 10, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world [or age], and is departed unto Thessalonica." Poor Demas, what a miserable choice! Vanity loved more than Christ and devotedness. Paul goes too far! yes, indeed, if the heart is divided between Christ and the world! Both cannot reign there at one time it is clear. If Christ has full possession, the world must go; if the world has still part possession, Christ must go in proportion. And if the world gets the upper hand, it is far too heavy a burden to carry in the pathway of faith. Hence the divergence between Paul and Demas. It is the history of Abraham and Lot repeated in brief. *A reserve* from Christ in the Christian's heart is a terrible entanglement. That soul is sure to break down in the moment of testing. Alas, how many have followed the lead of Demas from that day to this. He departed unto Thessalonica. Already there were some disorderly idlers and busybodies there. (2 Thess. iii. 11.) How sad if he should have forsaken the company of God's faithful and devoted servant for such!

In verse 14, Alexander the coppersmith did the apostle much evil. He puts him in the

242 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Lord's hands ; the servant of the Lord must not strive. But he warns Timothy against this open enemy. Satan varies his modes of attack. We never know from what quarter the assault will come, whether from within or without ; he is a skilful foe. In the last days, we need always be on guard. The conflict was already there, and Paul knew it well ; it is the same to-day. But the same Lord stands by and strengthens His servants, and will to the end.

But how blessed to find in the midst of this accumulation of evil and departure from the truth, a faithful remnant, Paul and his companions. First and foremost, the apostle of the Gentiles, now drawing to the close of life, standing undaunted in the breach, fearlessly asserting and maintaining the whole truth in its integrity, himself a witness and example of it for others to profit by. With Paul it was nothing but Christ to the end. Tested to the utmost, tried almost beyond measure, persecuted, and forsaken by many, he passed on in the thick of the fight in the power of the Holy Ghost, superior to the whole scene with all its dangers, difficulties, and disappointments, cheered by the promised appearing of his Master, stirring Timothy and the saints generally to the same pathway of devotedness.

Timothy, naturally timid, and comparatively young, is stirred to hold fast in the evil day, and

DANGERS IN A DAY OF RUIN. 243

instructed to keep the truth, when his father in the faith shall have left the arena of conflict for eternal rest in his gracious Master's presence (2 Tim. i. 13, 14) The source of his strength would be the grace that is in Christ Jesus. (Chap. ii. 1.)

Luke, Mark, Tychicus, Carpus, Prisca, Aquila, Onesiphorus, and others are found following in the same steps, a remnant walking in the fear of God, and the power of the truth. (Chap. iv. 11-13, 19-21.)

To-day, all the varied evils that we find in this instructive epistle are working around us with greater energy than ever. Departure from heavenly light and truth, denial of that which is fundamental, diversified imitations, the love of this present age, and open enmity to the blessed truth of God, and those who maintain and proclaim it, often in the most subtle forms, characterise the advanced (!) nineteenth century. Evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. (Chap. iii. 13.) The time *has come* when men will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts *heap to themselves* teachers (witness thousands of *professed* christian teachers and preachers), having itching ears. And men *have turned their ears away* from the truth, and *have turned* to fables. (Chap. iv. 3, 4.) What is the resource of the Christian? To continue, as Paul enjoined Timothy, in the

244 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

things which we have learned, and been assured of, now both in the *Old* and *New* Testaments. (Chap. iii. 14.) The holy scriptures alone can make us wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. And every scripture inspired by God is profitable. Through the word alone is the man of God perfected, and thoroughly furnished unto every good work. (Chap. iii. 15-17.)

Nourished in our souls by the truth of God, and living and acting in the power of the Holy Ghost, we shall rise superior to every wave of evil, and whilst on the one hand maintaining the truth in its integrity, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, on the other we shall be strengthened to act on the aggressive according to our measure, proclaiming the word and its authority, and devotedly serving our Lord Jesus Christ, till we, too, have finished our course. Happy he who may be able to say at the close, with the apostle, "I have kept the faith," looking for the crown of righteousness, the blessed reward of all them *who love His appearing*. May His grace abound towards us to this end.

"Behold, I come quickly ; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. *Him that overcometh* will I make a pillar in the temple of my God ; and he shall go no more out ; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God which

A CHURCH WITHOUT PRETENSION. 245

is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God : and I will write upon him *my new name.*" (Rev. iii. 11, 12.)

E. II. C.



A CHURCH WITHOUT PRETENSION.

(*Concluded.*)

5. "*Behold, I come quickly : hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*" (Ver. 11.) Now, for the first time, our Lord adds the word "quickly" to the promise of His return. *The hour of temptation* is the dark future of this poor world ; the coming of the Lord, *our* bright and blessed and glorious hope. "I come." The Lord is coming ; coming to claim His blood-bought ones to share His glory ; coming to establish His kingdom in power, when those who have been in His kingdom and patience (Rev. i. 9) shall reign with Him. "I am the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star." (Rev. xxii. 16.) "I come quickly," "*Surely, I come quickly.*" (Rev. xxii. 20.) Can each reader of these lines reply, Amen ; even so, come Lord Jesus ? (Rev. xxii. 20.) He is coming, and that quickly ; and He is coming to *crown* His own. Then "*hold fast.*" Has He shewn you the truth ? Has He opened

246 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

your eyes to the pathway of truth in the midst of a day of ruin? Has He unlocked the treasures of the riches of His grace and glory to the faith of your soul? Has He given you to know the *untraceable* wealth that you have in Him? Then "*hold fast* that which thou hast that *no one* take thy crown." The days are evil, and enemies abound. It is a day of pretension. *Your life* is safe; it is hid with Christ in God. But *your crown*, if you let go, you will surely lose it. "I come quickly." "Hold fast."

6. "*Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.*" (Ver. 12.) To overcome is to get the victory. The promise shews clearly we have foes to contend with. And here it is to overcome in the house of God. We are either overcomers, or overcome. The Lord well knows the difficulties, hence the encouragement. "I will make him a pillar," &c. The faithful saint here is characterized by "a little strength." There he shall be "a pillar," which is an emblem of strength and establishment. At the entrance to the temple of Solomon, there were two pillars of brass, named Jachin and Boaz. (1 Kings vii. 18-22.) The margin gives the signification of the former as, "he shall establish," and of the latter, "in it is strength." May we not take them as figurative of the position of favour and blessing, &c., in which the overcomer

A CHURCH WITHOUT PRETENSION. 247

in Philadelphia will be placed? Despised as insignificant and without strength by those who have established themselves here, the faithful saint (to employ the figure) shall be a Jachin or a Boaz "in the temple of my God." "And he shall go no more out." Here in rejection outside the camp with Him who suffered without the gate, the overcomer shall go in with Him in the day of glory and shall go no more out.

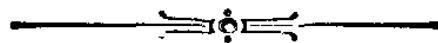
7. "*And I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.*" (Ver. 12.) Three more blessed promises are added, making five in all which shall surely be fulfilled for ever for the overcomer, by Him who cannot lie. "All the promises of God, in Christ are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." (2 Cor. i. 20.) No less than four times we get the precious words, "my God." It shews that the promises are *eternal*, and that the blessing will be of a wonderfully *intimate* character. In the passages in the Revelation which refer to the kingdom, the millennium, we get "God and the Lamb," but here it is "my God," pointing, we judge, to the eternal character of the reward, when Christ shall give up the mediatorial kingdom to the Father, and God shall be all in all. Is not this further confirmed in the use of the word "new"

248 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

in connection with the city of my God? In Revelation xx. where it is millennial, it is simply "the *holy* city," but in the description of the glory of the church in the eternal state, when all things will be made "*new*" (Rev. xxi. 1-5), it is called the "*new* Jerusalem." How deeply blessed! The tried but faithful saint, rewarded eternally; "the name of my God" written upon him, says the Lord, "and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God," in answer to the rejection borne patiently here from those who in principle falsely profess to be the city of God. And lastly, but not the least of these blessed promises, "I will write upon him *my new name*." We are not told what it is; surely that one will know upon whom it shall be written.

"*He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*" (Ver. 13.) What is said to one church is said to all. Blessed indeed is he, whose ear is open to hear the Spirit's voice pressing upon him what is suited to Christ in this evil day, and who in dependence upon Him, and in His grace, answer thereto, keeping the word of His patience till He come.

E. H. C.



“NEVERTHELESS GOD.”

“No rest” Troubled on every side; without fightings, within fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down.” (2 Cor. vii. 5, 6.)

THESE words might be well ruled out of season in this self-sufficient, boastful day. That they are so *in fact*, if not *in terms*, is more than evident to all whose eyes are opened and anointed.

One thing is clear enough, the apostle, blessed man, was not like some who are not apostles. But then, it is true, modern ideas and scriptural revelation are in direct antagonism. Paul was not the man who carried everything before him, applauded and made much of by those who are led by wisdom of words, excellency of speech, or intellectual prowess; on the contrary, *weakness, fear, and much trembling* marked him. It is an immense comfort, in the inward storms and conflicts of the heart, to be able to say, “*Nevertheless God.*” Oh, what a divine solace there is in Him, now made known to us in Christ. Not only our Father, but “*the Father of mercies* and God of *all comfort.*” Whatever of mercy is needed for His poor servant, our God is the Author of it. The connection of Father with *mercy* here, as with *glory* elsewhere, is very blessed; whatever of *comfort*, the heart op-

250 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

pressed in the cloudy and dark day, longs for, is all treasured up in God Himself, He is the God of all *encouragement* (παράκλησεως), the thought of *strengthening* is involved in the word, because properly it is the act of calling some one to our side to aid us.

It is both interesting and comforting to the heart to see that in the first chapter of this epistle the apostle *begins* with the source of all cheer and solace, while in the verses we are considering he turns from the *no rest* of his spirit, the *fightings* without and *fears* within, to God Himself in those words, "Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down." The words "*cast down*" are expressed in the original by one word, which means, being made low (ταπεινός); for this use of it see Luke iii. 5. There was only One who had *unmeasured* trouble and sorrow here, the blessed, precious Lord; to us all is *measured* out, either God-given or God-permitted sorrow. Our Father and God knows exactly what His poor vessels are able to bear, all goes on under His hand; while passing through the fire or through the water, He is no uninterested looker-on, be assured.

Dear reader, is the night long and dark with us? Do the floods of adversity and trial lift up their voice and waves? Look up, hope, and wait. Let us assure our hearts He is

SONGS IN THE NIGHT.

251

near us, and sees us, it may be, toiling in rowing against contrary winds and tide. (See Mark vi. 48.) Let us remember the *darkest* part of the night is not only that which is near the dawn of day, but it is then that He cometh unto us *walking upon the very elements that we dread*, then it is that *immediately* He talks with us and says, "Be of good cheer: it is I ; be not afraid."

May we take courage from all this, and even though our case be described in the words, "No rest," "troubled on every side," "without fightings," "within fears," *still there is "Nevertheless God."*

W. T. T.



SONGS IN THE NIGHT.

Is the midnight closing round you ?
 Are the shadows dark and long ?
 Ask Him to come close beside you,
 And He'll give you a new sweet song.

He'll give it, and sing it with you :
 And when weakness lets it down,
 He'll take up the broken cadence,
 And blend it with His own.

While another, and yet another,
 Shall sing the same sweet lays,
 Because He came close beside you,
 And taught you how to praise.

252 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

So the darkness and the singing
Shall be strangely mingled still,
Till you see the eternal daylight
That shines upon Zion's Hill.

And many a rapturous minstrel,
Among those sons of light,
Will say of his sweetest music,
"I learnt it in the night."

And many a rolling anthem
That fills the Father's home,
Sobb'd out its first rehearsal
In the shade of a darken'd room.

Lord Jesus, Thou art honour'd
Where the vaulted heavens ring,
With ten thousand hallelujahs,
That saints and angels sing.

And surely Thou art honour'd
Where the night-winds sadly moan,
And the songs are sung in darkness
Which Thou givest to Thine own.

C. P.



“WE BEHELD HIS GLORY.”

It is blessed beyond all expression to remember that the servants of God, as well as the great apostle of the Gentiles, are not only “ministers of Christ,” but also “stewards of the *mysteries* of God,” and as stewards our great delight should be to keep incorrupt and inviolate the precious peculiarities of divine revelation. The *mind* and *reason* of man will no doubt not only refuse them, but in the absence of affection, will speculate in the region of notions and theories. It has been very beautifully remarked that “The guardianship and witness of the personal glory of the Son of God is a chief part of this high and holy stewardship. A mere journeying from Egypt to Canaan would not have constituted true pilgrimage. Many a one had travelled that road without being a stranger and a pilgrim with God. Nay, though the journey were attended with all the trials and inconveniences of such an arid, unsheltered, and trackless wild, it would not have been divine or heavenly pilgrimage. A merely toilsome, self-denying life, even though endured with that courage which becomes God’s stranger on earth, will not do. In order to make that

254 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

journey the journey of God's Israel, the ark must be in their company, borne by a people ransomed by blood out of Egypt, and tending in their faith of a promise to Canaan.

"This was the business of Israel in the desert. They had to *conduct* the ark, to *accompany* it, to *guard* and *hallow* it. They might betray their weakness and incur chastening, and discipline in many a way and on many an occasion; but if their direct business were given up, all was gone. And this did come to pass. The tabernacle of Moloch was taken up, and the star of Remphan; and this was despite of the ark of Jehovah; and the camp had therefore their road turned away from Canaan to Babylon or Damascus." (Amos v.; Acts vii.)

Assuredly, beloved reader, what the ark was to Israel, the name and Person of the Son of God is to us, the very mystery committed to His people to-day.

It has often been observed in how many different respects He is called the Son of God; as born of the Virgin (see Luke i. 35); as in resurrection. (See Acts xiii. 33.) "He is the Son, and yet has obtained the name of Son. (Heb. i. 1-3.) Matthew and Mark first notice this sonship of God at His baptism. Luke goes further back and notices it at His birth. But John goes further back still, even to the immeasurable, unspeakable distance of eternity,

"WE BEHELD HIS GLORY."

255

and declares His sonship in the bosom of the Father." The same writer adds what will surely find a responsive echo in every heart that truly loves Him.

"We must not, beloved, *touch* this precious mystery. We should fear to dim the light of that love in which our souls are invited to walk on their way to heaven."

Oh, that all His own might better learn and know the manner of the reverence that our God and Father delights to see given to Him who is His beloved Son, in whom is all His good pleasure. May we not say that if there be absent from us that adoring, worshipping affection, which is due to His Person and glory, we are antagonistic to the great object for which the Comforter has come, even as the blessed Lord Jesus Himself said, "*He shall glorify me.*"

It has been blessedly said by another in words which one's heart gladly adopts as its own: "In the form of God He was God indeed; in the form of a servant He was a servant indeed. He 'thought it not robbery to be equal with God,' exercising all the divine rights and using all the divine treasure and resources with full authority; and yet making Himself of no reputation, emptying Himself and being obedient. This tells the secret.

"All that appears in the *history* is interpreted

256 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

by the *mystery*. It is as the glory in the cloud again. The companion of the camp, in all its afflictions, afflicted was the Lord of the camp."

How blessed to think of Him in this way, to dwell upon the preciousness of Him in whom we see the veiled glory all through all His lowly life here on earth, to honour, worship, adore Him.

I would in conclusion quote the beautiful words of another, who has long since gone to be with Himself for ever: "His glorious meetness (to use very much the language of another) for all the acts and duties of His mediatory office is resolved into the union of His two natures in the same Person. He who was conceived and born of the Virgin was Immanuel, that is, God was manifest in the flesh: 'To us a child is born, to us a son is given: . . . and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.' The One who spake to the Jews, and as a man was then only a little more than thirty years old, was before Abraham (John viii.), the perfect and complete work of Christ in every act of His office, in all that He did, in all that He suffered, in all that He continueth to do is the act and work of His whole Person. This is the mystery. Faith apprehends it in the full certainty of the soul."

"WE BEHELD HIS GLORY."

257

I would here add another word, in view of rightly distinguishing between His Person as God and Man, and *office*, which in various aspects He was pleased to undertake. His subjection, it has been well said, is that of office, the subjection of Him who had all things put under Him to Him who did put all things under Him. "It is the mystery of mysteries, *the Person* we are here looking at. When we think rightly of Him, even all the brightness of the coming kingdom will be seen but as a veil. Can the splendour of the throne display Him? Would not the honours of Solomon, yea, of all the kingdoms of the world, be a veil over the glory of the Son, as really as the scorn of Pilate's judgment-hall, or the thorns of Calvary? Is the *Bethlehemite* the measure of His personal worth, a single tittle more than the *Nazarene*? Therefore to faith it is easy to see the servant still, in days of exaltation as in days of sorrow. He served as servant, He serves as a Priest, He will serve as a King."

With all our hearts we say—

"O Lord, we adore Thee,
For Thou art the slain One,
That livest for ever,
Enthronèd in heaven!"

W. T. T.

CHERUBIM AND SERAPHIM.

EVERYTHING has been so falsified in the ordinary view of symbols in Christendom, that it is not so easy to get back to the true scriptural meaning of words.

I should like to write a few lines upon the symbols of judgment which we find in the Bible, and the very first that occur to me are contained in those words, often so wrongly interpreted : Cherubim and Seraphim.

We shall find the cherubim in many passages of the scriptures : the seraphim are only named once (that is in Isaiah vi.), though they are without doubt described in Revelation iv.

The cherubim are always in connection with God's judgment on the earth, with His judicial ways here ; the seraphim represent the absolute holiness of God : "Holy ! Holy ! Holy !" and I believe that they represent eternal judgment (Heb. ii.), that is to say, that which shall take place at the great white throne and shall be final. This passes into eternity, and is in connection with the eternal and unchangeable nature of God.

In the Revelation the two aspects of judgment are to be found, and I believe that for that very reason the living creatures of chapter iv. represent both cherubim and seraphim.

It will not be merely a curious study to look

at a few passages bearing upon our subject ; for the importance of the righteous judgment of God is great, and on every hand men are trying to make light of it.

The cherubim were placed at the east of Eden to bar the way to the tree of life after the fall (Gen. iii. 24) ; they appeared in image as forming part of the mercy-seat when Jehovah's authority was established in Israel. (Ex. xxxvii. 7.) God dwelt (and spoke from) between the cherubim in the government of His earthly people. (Ex. xxv. 22, and all through the Old Testament.)

Not the least interesting part of this symbolic teaching is the fact of the veil being embroidered with cherubim ; that is, I suppose the judicial glory of Christ, of that Man by whom, Paul declared to the Athenians, God should judge the habitable earth. (Acts xvii.) The immense statues, too, of 1 Kings vi. 23 are to be noticed.

Ezekiel saw the throne of God supported by the cherubim, and I suppose that their very appearance will tend to prove what I have said, that they represent God's judicial ways on earth. The grand heads of creation* appear

* Nothing betrays the incapacity of the human mind in divine things so much as an attempt to explain, by artistic methods, scripture symbols. The cleverest painter will not fail to be at fault here. See Michael Angelo's attempts to illustrate symbolic figures with his paint-brush.

260 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

here, and the swift rushing in the direction of the divine will, scattering coals of fire on their way, discerning and following up the path of judgment with unerring perception. These are the cherubim.

To a mind formed by the word of God the constantly occurring thought must come that the Jesus of the gospels is none other than the Jehovah of the prophets, and the thought is unspeakably blessed. Might we not see in the wonderful verses 26-28 of Ezekiel i. an adumbration of Him, who later on should take the form of a servant, and be found in the figure of a man? Of course I do not mean that He was man before the incarnation, but that we have here (in Ezek. i.) a kind of foreshadowing of the glorious Person (God and man) of Revelation iv., v.

The seraphim was only mentioned once in the Old Testament, that is in the well-known sixth of Isaiah, where the prophet sees the temple full of the glory of Jehovah. There is something very terrible in the seraphim,* the thresholds rocked to and fro at their voices (as each one cried), and the threefold holiness of God was so presented as to appal Isaiah and make

* Notice, in passing, the popular error of looking at cherubim and seraphim as infant-heads with wings. Is not the root *sharaph*, implying brightness and consuming fire?

CHERUBIM AND SERAPHIM.

261

him feel the hopeless state of the people. The purging is that of fire in this passage, and inevitable judgment pronounced on the guilty nation.

If we now turn for one moment to Revelation iv., we shall find, as I said, the two (cherubim and seraphim) combined in the living creatures which are in the midst of the throne and around it. There are the same symbolic faces as in Ezekiel: it is very interesting to compare Ezekiel x. 12 with Revelation iv. 8 as to the eyes, though in the latter passage more is stated, that is, there are eyes *within*. There are, too, the same number of wings and a *similar* cry to that in Isaiah vi. I say "similar," because I would invite every reader to note the important change.

These symbols are apprehended by a simple soul that is subject to the word of God, however little they may be comprehensible to the natural mind. They speak of a God who is holy and righteous and who has the upper hand in the government of the universe: of Him who, as Judge of all the earth, shall do right, and who shall intervene in judicial action to destroy the wicked and establish righteousness upon earth.

These symbols are connected in the Revelation with a well-known Person, Creator in chapter iv., Redeemer in chapter v., our blessed Lord and Saviour; and it is not without great

262 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

joy and thanksgiving that we behold Him in His glory (although we see not yet all things put under Him), and await the coming epoch when He shall be manifested before the universe with all the emblems of divine majesty and human perfection, to judge and overcome evil, and bring in justice.

The symbols do not stop at millennial blessing, but refer; I doubt not, to that eternal stability which shall follow the last judgment of a holy God.

E. L. B.



TWO CIRCLES OF DIVINE LOVE.

THE child of God is called upon to move within two circles of divine love. The first is God's love to the world (John iii. 16); the second, is Christ's love to the church. (Eph. v. 25-27.) Within these two circles is he set to act in the same way that God and Christ act. In the one, God is the pattern; in the other, Christ. If it is the world, "*God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.*" It is the heart of God going out in the intensest love to a fallen and rebellious world. If it is the church, "*Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it.*" We are brought into fellowship with the heart of God and Christ, and as we move about within these

TWO CIRCLES OF DIVINE LOVE. 263

two circles it is ours to be filled with, and constrained by, the same love. God's nature is love, and we are born of Him. We are members of Christ, and should love one another.

As far as the world is concerned God is our pattern. God loved and gave. The very misery and helplessness of man were the means of the display of the nature of God, and the sphere of the operations of His love. There was nothing in the world to draw out His love but the misery of man. "God loved," because He is love, and the world was a fitting object upon which that love could bestow itself, and in which there were those it could serve; for love delights to *serve*, while selfishness, as another has said, delights to be served.

It is then like God to love, and like His love to be ever in the attitude of service. Nor must we wait until we find those who will appreciate our service. It is like God, and from God, we are to act, and find in the misery of our fellow men an occasion for the service of our love. We may meet with nothing but rebuffs for the time being, but this need not dry up the springs of our love, for the blessed heart of God is the source from whence we draw. Our hearts are but the channel of the mighty love of God to flow in, and the nearer we are to the heart of God, the freer we are from miserable self, the more freely will the love of God flow out from us.

264 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

It was in the strength of this love that the apostles served, suffered and died. It was the power of this love that enabled the martyrs to kiss the stake to which they were chained to be burnt, and made them superior to the horrors of such a death, and in imitation of their divine Master to pray for their murderers. It was constrained by this love, that never fails, that thousands of devoted missionaries have left home and native land, and exposed themselves to privation and death in heathen countries, in order to carry the priceless gospel to the benighted souls there. And nothing short of this love, and being kept in blessed touch with the heart of God, the divine source of it, will keep us fresh in our service, in a world where self and selfishness are the leading characteristics.

Oh, to be constantly filled with this blessed mighty love of our God, so that our every act toward the lost shall savour of it, and they shall see in us a reflection, feeble though it may be, of the heart and love of God!

Our business in this world of woe then is to manifest, according to our measure, the nature of God, which is love. Or as another has beautifully said, "My business is to shew the character of Christ before the world—gentleness and meekness in a world of wrong—that is superiority."

We are not to wait until our love is appreciated.

TWO CIRCLES OF DIVINE LOVE. 265

That would not be like God. He loved and gave, though those whom He loved, and for whom He gave His beloved Son, took Him and slew Him, and all bruised and mangled threw Him back into the bosom of His Father, who had so freely given Him. Afterwards many of those who hated Him, and were bent on shedding His blood, were brought to feel the mighty power of His love, and the cleansing virtues of His precious blood.

"Love never faileth." It is in the constancy and persistency of this divine love we are to go on in our service, though for our love we get hatred, and though our object is their eternal blessing, be prepared to be misunderstood. In this we shall be like our divine Master, who was hated without a cause, and who, in His service of love, endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself.

"Christ, loved the church . . . and gave himself for it." (Eph. v. 25.) And the Christ who loved and gave Himself for the church, will not fail to ultimately present the church to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish. And when thus presented, it will be as the fruit of divine purpose, and the death of the cross, and be clothed with the perfection of Christ and the righteousness of God. No traces left of the condition from

266 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

whence it was redeemed. All glorious within and without, and in every way suited to the heavenly Bridegroom to whom she will be given.

But in the meantime, until that blessed moment arrives of the church's presentation to Christ, we get a very blessed view of His love to the church, and each member that composes it, in His blessed ministry above. "*That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.*" (Ver. 26.) His love led Him to the cross. He gave Himself for the church. But now on high He performs the blessed service of love as our Advocate. Alas, how often we get defiled by the allowance of the flesh, or through coming in contact with the world! These defilements are removed from the conscience through the application of the word in its convicting and cleansing power. The Spirit of God applies the word, conviction and repentance are wrought in our souls, and we turn to God and confess our sins, and "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 9.)

What love is this! Not only does He ceaselessly intercede for His people, but when they have become defiled, when communion with God the Father is for the time being lost, and darkness it may be fills the soul, then the blessed Advocate, in His unceasing and untiring love,

TWO CIRCLES OF DIVINE LOVE. 267

stoops down and washes the feet of such, producing by the Holy Ghost proper exercises of soul, lifts up and restores to the soul the joy of God's salvation, and leads into the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

But more, for the love of Christ passeth knowledge, and yet it can be known in the way of our daily experience. It is beyond all human ken and man's fathoming; but, thank God, it can be tasted and enjoyed, and it is the very enjoyment of the love of Him, whom we have never seen, that sets our hearts a-longing to see Himself, and taste "the love that knows no let," in that bright scene above. "As for me [as contrasted with the man of the world, who has his portion in this life, verse 14], I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." (Psa. xvii. 15.)

"No man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (Eph. v. 29, 30.)

How very precious to Christ, the Head, must be every member of His body. With Him it is no question whether they are black or white, rich or poor, high-born or low-born, learned or unlearned, refined or unrefined, mentally strong or mentally weak, whether from the ranks of the highest society of the old and new world, or from

268 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

the forests of central Africa. If they are redeemed to God by His blood, and by the Holy Spirit united to Him in indissoluble union, they are alike precious to Him, and the objects of His ceaseless love. He found them each one in the gutter of sin, afar from God, defiled from head to foot, within and without, and the sentence of condemnation resting on them. The church in this condition he loved even unto death, and with the same love He watches over each member to cleanse by the water of the word, and to nourish and cherish as His own flesh, and finally to present to Himself all-glorious, without spot, or wrinkle—holy and without blemish.

Was the church the object of His love! and is it still the object of the same ceaseless untiring love! Thank God, it is! Within, then, that circle of divine and mighty love are we set, to care for and to serve those who are so precious to Christ. Does He love them? *so should we.* Does He serve them? *so should we.* Does He care for them? *so should we.* Does He nourish and cherish them? *so should we.* Does He ever bear them upon His heart? *so should we.* Does He wash their feet? *so should we.* Does He love them though often wilful and wayward? *so should we.* Is love the only motive of all His gracious service for them? *it should be our motive also.* Does He seek out that which is lost, and bring again that which is driven away,

“LORD TEACH US TO PRAY.” 269

and bind that which is broken, and strengthen that which is sick? (Ezek. xxxiv. 16.) *So should we.* He nourishes and cherishes the members of His body, *and so should we*, for we are members one of another.

Alas, how often we thrust with side and shoulder, and push the diseased with our horns, and scatter abroad the precious lambs and sheep of His flock! And in this how infinitely unlike the blessed Master we are. Alas, how often self, and self-seeking is the motive of action, and not the unfailing love of Christ!

May we have grace to imitate His blessed example, and in the day of His appearing get His approval for our care of His precious flock. (1 Pet. v. 1-4.)

E. A.



“LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.”

ONE of the greatest needs to-day is the need of men of prayer. But this need is not a need that can easily be met, because prayer is a most wonderful thing, and very few of us really know what it means. It is by prayer that we get right into contact with God, into fellowship with God; and the reason that the lives of many of us are so poor and weak is that we do not know how

270 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

to pray. We do not know what that fellowship with God, which true prayer means, is, and because we do not know that, our lives are as they are.

I propose to deal with some of the New Testament teaching about prayer, and to take four words which each have a lesson for us, and I think that as we look into these words, we shall feel that in this matter of prayer, notwithstanding how long we have known God, we are only beginners.

The first word we draw attention to is—*Be sober when you pray*. You will find 1 Peter iv. 7 reads in the revised version—"Be ye therefore of sound mind, and be sober unto prayer." The word there used is a very startling one, and means *to abstain from wine*.

How many a christian man or woman can be intoxicated with pride, because some rival has outstripped them in the race, because some slight has been given, some insult has been offered, and with the whole spirit drunk with pride this person tries to pray. Yes, and how many have come to God in prayer drunk with vanity, vanity to which friends have most injudiciously ministered, and the little soul, swelling with vanity, comes into the presence of the great and holy God! Oh! how this cuts into our hearts!

I think many of us are lacking in reverence with regard to prayer. We have dwelt very

"LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY." 271

much upon the wonderful access which the Lord Jesus Christ gives us into the Father's presence, but I sometimes fear we are losing sight of the greatness and majesty of God. There is an awful gulf between us at our best and God, and when we are engaging in an exercise so tremendously solemn as prayer, what this word says to us is in effect: Bring to the exercise of prayer a penitent, humble, contrite, clear, sound mind, a mind from which those hindrances, those sins just referred to, have been definitely and by the help of God put away.

The second word that we deal with brings with it this lesson, *Be at leisure when you pray*. You will find this word in 1 Corinthians vii. 5. We are to bring to the exercise of prayer not only a *sober* mind, but a *calm* mind. We are told that the dew falls only when the atmosphere is still, and it is perfectly certain that the dew of prayer falls upon the soul bountifully and abundantly only when the soul is quiet and calm before God. I fancy some of you say, "I have so much work to do in these busy days, that it is quite impossible to be at leisure." Do less that you may do more, do more by doing less; let the work fall that you may give yourselves unto prayer. We are forgetful of the fact that five minutes work in the power of the Spirit of God is worth five years work without the Spirit, and that if we only were more in fellowship with God,

272 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

our words would have a power that at present they have not. Luther, a far busier man than any of us is likely to be, used to say on some of his heaviest days, "I have so much work to do to-day that I do not see how I can get on without two or three hours of prayer." And if you read the biographies of the most eminent workers for God that the church of Christ has ever had, you will find the secret of their power did not lie so much in what they did in the presence of men, as in what they did in the presence of God.

Then there is another word. *Make prayer the great business of your life.* "Be instant in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving." What does God think of our being so busy that we have no time for prayer? What does God think of our being so *eager to get alongside of men* that we are knocking the time out of our days, when we ought to get alongside God?

Now I want to draw your attention to a word that brings a very solemn lesson, *to make prayer a matter of life and death.* I do not know how I can translate it otherwise than thus. You will find this remarkable word in Colossians iv. 12 : "Epaphras always *labouring fervently* for you in prayer," etc. Now the word there used, *labouring fervently*, is *striving*, and it is the word from which agonise is taken : *agonising*

“LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.” 273

in prayer. The teaching of this word is tremendously wide and deep, and when we are brought in contact with it, it is then we feel *how little we know about prayer*; that our prayer life is so shallow compared with what it ought to be if we were true to God's word.

Now if we have learned these lessons, what like will our prayers be? First of all, *our prayers will be very largely secret*. You know it is when prayer is secret that it is always best and most real. When a man is praying in the presence of his fellowmen, the temptation to unreality is so terrific that very few altogether escape it. And it is when prayer is secret that it is deepest. It is a very striking testimony to the loneliness of a human soul, that those things that are deepest in our life we can share only with God. When we learn what agony in prayer is we shall not wear our heart on our sleeve.

But, although prayer is secret, *it will affect everything in the life*. The man who has learned what it is to agonise in prayer cannot keep secret altogether, for the fragrance of it will break over the whole life and fill the house where he dwells.

Then, when we have learned what it is to agonise in prayer, our prayers, I believe, will be *self-denying*. This is brought out strikingly by the fact that so often in scripture fasting is connected with prayer. There is to be *discipline* in it. That lesson runs right through the whole of

274 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

the teaching about prayer. If we have learned these lessons *our prayers will be sustained*. You know how marvellous the teaching of the New Testament is about sustained prayer. Luke xviii. 1: "That men ought *always* to pray;" 1 Thessalonians v. 17: "Pray *without ceasing*;" and so on in many other passages. I do not think many of us have realised the value of sustained prayer. Oh, if we would only go on! Jesus Christ spent whole nights in prayer. Oh, why are our prayers not more sustained!

And then our prayers *will be Spirit-taught*. "Praying in the Holy Ghost." We shall never know what it is to pray aright until we are filled with God's Spirit, until we are under His control, with the ear open to His voice, and the eye opened by Himself to see.

But if our prayers are secret, if our prayers are self-denying, sustained and Spirit-taught, it hardly needs to be added that our prayers will be *successful*. Now what does success in prayer mean? Success in prayer is *getting into the presence of, and into contact with, God*. That is what we want. If our lives were only fuller of God, all these wretched things that trouble us would be swept out of sight, as the mud is swept out of sight when the glorious ocean tide floods it.

—*Extracted.*



ZION, THE MOUNTAIN OF MY HOLINESS.

(PSA. II.)

IN the second psalm a general rising is described against Jehovah and against His anointed.

There can be no doubt, from the whole teaching of the scriptures, that there will be a final revolt against God and Christ, but the principle has already been too clearly manifested at the crucifixion, where Jews and Gentiles were quite agreed in casting off divine authority. God's King was there rejected by His own people: "We have no king but Cæsar."

But it will be said that we have here a more extensive rebellion, and it is too true. There is a confederacy of people, princes, and kings to throw off the yoke of the Lord. "Union is strength," they say; and they are united in rejecting Christ.

There are two wonderful aspects of our blessed Lord (besides that glorious one of Messiah) to be noticed in Psalm ii.: He is God's King, the true King of Israel, and He is also declared to be the Son, born on earth: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee."

None of us doubt, I will say in passing, that He is the eternal Son of the Father; but this second aspect of which I speak is rather

276 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

that of Son of God born upon the earth. This very glory depends upon the Deity of His Person, and we lose nothing in following the aspects presented to us in scripture.

It is of this first blessed truth that I desire to say a few words. "Yet I have anointed* my king upon Zion, the mountain of my holiness."

We may contemplate for a moment God's King; and consider, too, briefly: "Zion, the mountain of his holiness."

I suppose there is no politician, either in Europe or in the East, but who is sorely puzzled from time to time about "the Eastern question," a question which involves that of the government of the whole world, the balancing of the Roman nations against the North, and much more.

There is but one answer to this immense question, and that answer is: "God's King." Adonai mocks at the puny efforts of the universal confederates, and in His righteous wrath declares that He has anointed His King. A very few strokes of His rod shall shiver to pieces the earthen vessels who shall have dared to declare their force against Him. God is still holding in reserve His king, and every single question of politics, diplomacy, and

* There can be no doubt that this is the true way to read the verse. It is more than "I have set," there is the act of consecration.

ZION, THE MOUNTAIN OF MY HOLINESS. 277

government shall be settled for ever when the Monarch shall be established on His throne ; every question shall end, for everything shall be placed in His hands. An absolute monarchy of justice, order, and peace : the king of God's choice is a most blessed subject to harp upon (Psa. xlv. 1), and if any one like to contemplate a truly prosperous rule, let him read Psalm lxxii. No doubt there will be some very severe blows given by the rod of iron before the sceptre of gold be swayed.

And I shall say again, by the way, that we are living in a world that has refused to listen to God's voice ; the true King has been rejected, and the word itself says that had the princes of the world possessed wisdom, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. We meanwhile have a far more excellent part, in the heavenly portion of the church with Christ. I have often thought how little the choice of Barabbas profited the Jews, when Titus came and destroyed their city ; and again, how little use are the efforts of any European concert to make plans for the division of Palestine, as has often been the case. God has set His King on the holy hill of Zion.

Zion is associated with David and with grace. It is very interesting to observe the passages of the Psalms and prophets in which the word

278 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Zion occurs; and I would invite my reader to look into them. David took the stronghold of Zion (1 Chron. xi. 5), and it is expressly said in Psalm lxxviii. 68 that God chose the tribe of Judah and Zion. See again Psalm xlviii. 12.

The prophet Isaiah, who gives us the immense framework of all prophecy, constantly speaks of Zion. It is the metropolis of the whole earth, and shall be the centre of the display of the power of God when He shall have established His King there. I have no doubt that Jerusalem and Rome are the two poles of the prophetic earth, but it is Jerusalem (described as *Zion* when God's gracious intervention to save the kingdom and the whole world from ruin is presented to us) that is God's metropolis. "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob saith the Lord." (Isa. lix. 20.) See, too, Isaiah lx. 14-16.

Surely there would be a moral application now of the end of Psalm ii. "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings Kiss the Son, lest he be angry. . . . Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

E. L. B.



THE *CROSS*, THE *GRAVE* AND THE *GLORY*.

HOW blessed to have found in the cross and grave of the Lord Jesus, the burial place of all one's sinful doubts and fears ; but more blessed still is it to look up and see the bright morning of our hopes, beyond the possibility of a cloud. The glory of the Father, came down to the very spot where the blessed One, our own precious Lord and Master lay in death, that death too wherein God was perfectly glorified, and "Set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Now how blessed for us to learn power in that redemption and resurrection of Christ our Lord, and also to see in them the very expression and model of the action of the same power working in us, to put us in association with Him *where He is*, that we may have part in the glory of this same precious Lord and Master. Oh, how near to each other have *death*, the *grave* and *glory* come in all that He passed through and has now gone into ; how

280 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

blessed to think of Him on high, *the man* who is worthy ; we never get that in the Old Testament ; to Abraham, the father of the faithful, God was Almighty, and he was *blessed*, Solomon too was in his day in a wonderful way *endowed*, but in Christ God has found a man who is *worthy*, who has *prevailed*, who has a *claim*. May the hearts of all who love Him and know His love, find their increasing comfort and rest in Himself, amid all the wild storms that sweep over time's pathway, may His peace (" my peace ") ever rule in their hearts.

W. T. T.



“HIS WORD WAS WITH POWER.”

(LUKE IV. 14-32.)

WE have had before us, in Matthew ii., the first advent of our blessed Lord ; and how all men, all classes of people, stood tested by it, and in relation to Him. In the scripture above, the Holy Ghost brings before us the two great consequent effects of His presence on earth, namely, the Christ in His own blessed person, *substantiating promise*, and God in Him, here on earth, manifested and revealed in all His grace. On these two themes let us dwell for a little.

First, then, as to how all promise met and was fulfilled in Christ ; it is blessed to see that He presents Himself in their synagogue at Nazareth as the very One in whom the words of Isaiah lxi. were fulfilled. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor ; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” How blessed ! He stood before them there as Jehovah’s anointed preacher, as Jehovah’s sent healer of broken hearts, He presents Himself before their very eyes as the fulfilment in this of their own prophet ; the omission, too, of the last clause of

282 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

verse 2 of this prophecy makes the grace presented in Himself all the more striking, for surely the day of vengeance *will* come ; but it was not *then*. He who came as Saviour *will come again* as Judge, but that time has not as yet run round ; but *now*, as when He was on earth, it was saving grace and goodness which was reflected in Him in all His ways and dealings with men. How little we think of the exact character of this world in His eye, when He was in it. What did He find in the favoured land—Jehovah's land ? He found death, devils, disease, sorrow, misery and wretchedness on every hand. He did not, blessed be His name, stand at a distance, but entered into all the wretchedness and sorrow as none else but Himself could do, measured it all and gauged it all, as only He could. How we are made to feel that we live too far away from human wretchedness to know it in all its reality, but how blessed to know there was One who in grace came into the midst of it, walked through it, as another has most blessedly expressed it : "bringing every grace in God down into man, and taking every sorrow in man up into God."

Now all God's previous dealings with men kept man at a distance in his sins, and shut God in, holy and righteous in Himself ; darkness and distance describe this period of dealing and testing—claims unmet and demands not dis-

“HIS WORD WAS WITH POWER.” 283

charged were the sad features of that dispensation. “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth subsists through Jesus Christ,”—that is, as another has said, “That which not having actually been in being before (that is, in the world) now begins to be so.” (ἐγένετο.) How blessed is all this to dwell upon, what moral glories surround His path on earth in every part of it, as another has sung :—

“We love Thy footprints here to trace,
The moral beauty and the grace
Of all Thy walk of love :
Dear memories !—but would we detain
Thee here below for any gain,
Thy company would prove ?”

We have, then, in this precious scripture, how promise was fulfilled in His Person—it was so in *fact*, and He Himself announces it : “This day is this scripture *fulfilled* in your ears.” But there is a testimony even from them, for they wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. Blessed for ever be His name ! there was no cause for surprise or wonder in that. Alas ! we often may well be surprised at the ungracious words and works which so often characterise us ; but He was the living contrast to us in everything, in Him the perfection of manhood was found, and found, too, in perfection, as another has so blessedly expressed it : “The hand that struck the chord

284 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

found all in tune : all answered to the mind of Him whose thoughts of grace and holiness, of goodness, yet of judgment of evil, whose fulness of blessing in goodness were sounds of sweetness to every wearied ear, and found in Christ their only expression, every element, every faculty in His humanity, responded to the impulse which the divine will gave to it, and then ceased in a tranquillity in which self had no place."

But observe, further, how that it was in His *Person* promise was fulfilled, and there is in this fact a charm of especial sweetness to the heart, it was not the *quality* of grace that shone on one and another here on earth in their wretchedness and misery, but here He Himself, in Person, was found God and man in one Person, so that He and He alone could say, in reply to the question "Who art thou?" Absolutely what I say unto you—He *was* what He said. Oh the moral glory and beauty of such an utterance as that! But now mark how all this is met. The announcement that promise was fulfilled in His Person, calls forth the contemptuous utterance : "Is not this Joseph's son?" Their hearts were veiled so as to be unable to see who was there, the godhead glory shining through the human veil. His lowliness offended their pride, and they refused Him ; but can grace be turned aside by all the folly and evil of man? Never! it has its purposes which it accomplishes in His

“HIS WORD WAS WITH POWER.” 285

time, and to this the blessed Lord gives utterance in these words, namely, “Many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land ; but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet ; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.” That is, reject grace and Christ as you may, he will still have objects of divine favour ; yet this awakes, if possible, deeper animosity, and as at first they hated and rejected Him, so here they are ready to resort to *violence* and force, to thrust the blessed One out of the city, and even led Him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong.

Oh, what a picture of man, of humanity, we have here ! how exposed and by Himself, too, who was God revealed in flesh ! and this as law never could expose ; it did condemn for what was there found as meriting condemnation, it dealt in all its severity with the “what hast thou done” of man ; but He who came as Saviour, and to accomplish salvation, tested the roots of man’s moral status, and brought to light, as He alone could, the “where art thou” of man. Oh, how blessed to see Him, wherever we see Him, exposing by His perfectness that which He was

286 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

about to end on the cross in His own precious death !

But we must turn now to chapter v., and dwell for a little on the second point, which I have spoken of already and which is there found. In this chapter, then, we find the revelation of God in a man, as in chapter iv. we have seen how that promise was fulfilled in Him. It is the great subject throughout the chapter, though set forth in various ways. The first great instance of this is in verses 1-11 : it is Jehovah revealed in this blessed Man to Peter's *conscience*, the circumstances all lend their weight to the fact. Peter had been called ere this, he had companied with the Lord and seen His ways, yet, as to Peter's conscience, he had never been face to face, so to speak, with God ; but now the moment for it has arrived, and Peter, in the most favourable circumstances that man could find himself surrounded by, privileged to place his boat at the service of the Lord of glory—makes a never-to-be-forgotten discovery. The blessed One, having taught the people out of the ship, directs Peter to launch out into the deep, and let down the nets for a draught. Peter does so, evidently doubting the use of further toil after a night of fruitless labour. (Ver. 5.) This done, the nets inclosed the treasures of the deep ; He who *created* them, *controlled* them and *commanded* them according to His sovereign pleasure ; so

“HIS WORD WAS WITH POWER.” 287

great was the take that the net brake, the filled ships began to sink, the power and presence of Jehovah in a Man were there, and Peter's conscience breaks down in His presence with “Depart from me ; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” What a moment of light it was ! It is written, “God is light”—here is the great proof of it in the conscience of Peter.

The Lord has His own way of conducting us all into this solitude ; in that light we see light, as Peter did, he found out that he was “a sinful man”—roots and springs and sources of moral darkness all were there uncovered. And so it is with us, it is in the presence of God alone we learn what we are, and knowledge of self is not reached save there. The revelation of God to us can alone give the sense that we are unfit for His presence. This has ever been the case. (See Isa. vi. ; Dan. x. 8.)

But observe further here, it was not simply Jehovah revealed to Peter's conscience, *but in grace*, and hence the blessed words, “Fear not.” In very truth, the One who awakened the conscience can alone meet its thus disclosed needs. It is from Himself who created the earthquake in the conscience, that the sounds of mercy come. The prison at Philippi, later on, when, redemption being completed, Christ was on high in the glory of God, affords the same instruction. There the earthquake which shook

288 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

the foundation of the dungeon was His power in nature, as the moral earthquake which shook the jailer (who was in reality the prisoner) was His power in conscience yet in grace! How blessed! and His voice of mercy through His own servants, afflicted and bruised and beaten as they were, was as distinctly His acting in grace as here—"Do thyself no harm, for we are all here" and "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Blessed words! The first to express the divine compassion that never overlooks human misery, the second to proclaim that grace which is rich and full and free.

Ere we pass from this blessed picture, just observe the effect as here presented to us in verse 11: "And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him." He had captivated their hearts for Himself. He had so fully filled their souls that all on earth was left behind for Him; true, they did not know Him beyond earth for the moment, and hence after His death, when as they thought all was gone for them, when their *sight* could no longer behold Him, they returned to their fishing. (See John xxi. 3.) Yet that does not alter the fact now stated, that at this time, as far as it went, all is forsaken for Himself. Is it any different thing now? What can take the heart out of present things but a glorified Christ?

“HIS WORD WAS WITH POWER.” 289

Who could say, “I count all things but loss,” but he in whose heart the Saviour in glory had been revealed? How blessed when a double discovery is thus made: the vileness of oneself from which it is a relief to retire, and the perfectness of Jesus who becomes the soul’s eternal portion and stay.

In the next instance, recorded in verses 12–15, we have Jehovah revealed in His cleansing power. How blessed to see in every case that *He is*, as well as that *He reveals*, Jehovah. The healing of a leper was Jehovah’s work alone. But mark this, whilst His power was recognised, His goodness or willingness to help was not assured to the diseased. Now see verse 12, “Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.” The way the Lord meets this is so precious, He not only says He is willing, but touches him—it will be borne in mind that to touch a leper made him who so acted unclean in the midst of Israel, and, as such, outside the camp was his place. But observe the contrast here: before their eyes was One who, though Man, was also God, One who could touch a leper and not be defiled, One who had come in all His grace to remove that very defilement, One in whom was all the willingness of mercy and goodness, and One who had all power as God. Well may we sing,

“Whose love is as great as His power,
And knows neither measure nor end.”

290 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

How blessed to just sit down and dwell in adoring delight on all the perfections and glories of Christ, to find our food and freshness in thus, by faith, taking Him into our souls, the very bread of God that cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world.

There is one other point here of exceeding beauty and blessedness, on which it is a delight to dwell. Observe verse 16, how fully and perfectly He maintains His place of entire and perfect dependence as Man before God, and that, too, in the hour of His fame and greatness among men. Oh, how precious that verse: "He withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed"—that is, He was at that time waiting, occupied with prayer; what a sight for angels and for men! let the power exercised be ever so great, and manifestly the power of God—divine power—still He is, as ever, the dependent Man. How blessed!

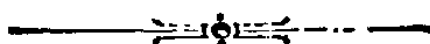
I will, ere bringing these thoughts to a close, here transcribe a few words of another, which are both food and solace to the heart in these weary days, and amid the heat and strife of the desert scene, now so near its end, and suggested by these scenes and events on which our hearts have been dwelling—"If I open the Old Testament anywhere, the gospels, the epistles, what different atmosphere I find myself in at once. In the old: ways, dealings, government, man—

“HIS WORD WAS WITH POWER.” 291

though man and the world governed by God—piety, no doubt, but piety in that scene ; and even in the gospels and epistles the difference is quite as great—in certain respects more important. In the epistles (so the Acts) one active to gather—souls devoted to Christ, valuing Him and His work above all—power shewn more than in Christ on earth, as He promised—it is gathering, then caring power. I get back, though now in the power of the Holy Ghost, and grace in a saving, gathering way, to man, and it soon fails. But in the gospels I find a centre where my mind reposes, which is itself—always itself, and nothing like it—moves through a discordant scene, attracting to itself through grace (what no apostle did or could do) and shining in its own perfection unaltered, and unalterable in all circumstances.”

What comfort and rest of heart to sit at His feet, to hear His voice, amid all the tumultuous waves and billows of present sorrows and siftings ! May He, who alone can effect it for us, bring us there and keep us there, giving us so to taste the joys of His company and presence, that nothing around in the world *without*, and nothing in the far more insidious world *within*, may tempt us to leave our sweet retreat.

W. T. T.



THE THOUGHTFULNESS OF DIVINE LOVE.

(1 JOHN IV. 16.)

THIS passage is one of much beauty and comfort to the earnest and lowly soul, for it presents to us God, thinking of us from our state of utter sinfulness on to judgment itself, and displays His love from beginning to end.

In general, the epistle presents us divine life, that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested here below in the Person of the Lord Jesus, communicated to others, that thing, as it is said, which is true in Him and in us.

The Gospel of John, besides the doctrine of the Comforter, presents to us God manifested in the Son, and life in Himself; the epistle, life communicated to us, and that life known in its fruits of love to the brethren, and obedience or practical righteousness.

In the passage before us, love is especially the subject, and first love as partaking of the nature of Him who is love. He that loveth is born of God and knows God; partakes of the nature and knows Him who is it, as partaker of it.

Possession of a nature (and without possessing it is impossible), makes us know what that nature is, what the Being is who has that nature. A

THE THOUGHTFULNESS OF DIVINE LOVE. 293

mere animal does not know what a man is, his way of thinking, feeling; a man knows what a man is. What an angel is, save as the part of connection with God necessarily reveals some elements of his nature, he does not know. He that loves, knows God, for he is born of Him, being partaker of the divine nature: a blessed truth, the spring (righteousness being introduced), of eternal joy and infinite delight.

But when we come to the practice down here, we find difficulty in it. I love the brethren: what coldness after all, often self has come in, and I fail in love. I cannot trust my own heart a minute. Can I really say I am born of God and know God when I find so much in a treacherous heart that belies after all what I desire? I hope, I fear—there is no liberty of spirit. And it is so far well; but, therefore, the blessed Spirit gives us the knowledge of love from another side, and where it is perfect: in God Himself, His ways and dealings. In this the love of God is *manifested* towards us, in our case. But let me briefly analyse the passage, that we may seize its completeness and bearing. First, in verses 9, 10, God's love to the sinner; verse 12, the enjoyment of His love in the saint; and 17, perfected in the boldness it gives us for the day of judgment.

First, His love to us as sinners. The eternal

294 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

object of God's delight, His only begotten Son, was sent in blessing to us, and with this two-fold object—first the positive blessing, what is given, that we might live through Him. We were dead in sin, God gives us a new life—a divine life. We no longer live through Adam, but through the Son of God. He that hath the Son hath life. Our existence towards God is divine life in Christ. God has thought of our ruin in love, and given us eternal life in His Son.

But we were guilty also, as responsible beings before Him. Here His love has met us. He has given His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. It is not law, nor duty, though it was there, but because it was there, ruin, failure, and condemnation. But love is not in that we love God (which is what we have to look for in our hearts if we seek the proof of life there, but then really under law); that law required, and rightly—but in that God loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins. It is not requiring what we ought to be from us, just as this is, but putting away, making a holy propitiation for our sins. We are dead in sins, and He gives us life. We were guilty, and He has given Him to make propitiation for our sins. He has met our whole case, in both its aspects as sinners. Now the love of God is known, the heart free, the conscience purged, he can exhort us to love one another.

THE THOUGHTFULNESS OF DIVINE LOVE. 295

Now we have to do with a saint, and he has more privileges than being forgiven and having life. No man has seen God. How know Him, even if we have a life and nature which capacitates us thereto? know Him as an object fully before our souls, and so known. Before the world this was in Christ personally present revealing Him (see John i. 18), and He was rejected. But how in us? If we love one another, *God dwelleth in us*, and His love is perfected in us. Here is the saint's privilege. He enjoys the love of God, poured out in his own soul. God dwells in him by His Spirit, and makes His presence known in infinite and enjoyed love, but as dwelling in the believer. It is not still that we love Him, but that His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us. It is in our hearts, but what is there is the love of God, known and enjoyed by His presence. If God thus dwells in us—which we know, because He has given us of His Spirit, and sheds that love by His very presence abroad in our hearts—we may well say perfected in love, for what is more perfect than God in love, and what more perfect exercise and display of it in *communication* to us than His dwelling in us Himself, who is it perfectly, and sheds it abroad in our hearts by His presence; but even this looks out when the proof of it is to be given. We have seen and

296 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. You cannot separate the enjoyment of God's love in us by His presence, from that in which it has been perfectly displayed in His own work to His own glory. And this portion of the Christian is not a special or extraordinary proof of progress. It is the christian state. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God. For God, if He dwell in us, is infinite, and we dwell in Him, feel surrounded, and are, by His goodness, love, power, so that our abode and rest is in Him, and in the fulness of His love. All this may be realised in different degrees, but it belongs to every one that confesseth JESUS, the lowly Man, to be the Son of God. Of course, he does not speak of hypocrites.

But again the apostle carefully brings us back to look at the love as in God, as displayed towards us. We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. Whatever the enjoyment of the love and the realisation of it, it is always the love in Him, sovereign love, which He hath had to us. We know God. God is love, and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him. Here, though the love is ever the same, what God is and what He displays to us, yet the order of thought is somewhat different. I am dwelling in love, the

THE THOUGHTFULNESS OF DIVINE LOVE. 297

enjoyment and consciousness of this love, and its power to exercise towards others. I dwell then in God, for God is love; dwelling in this he dwells in God, and this is what God is. His soul rests, reposes, and confides in Him, surrounded by His goodness, and so as that love is active in his soul, shed abroad and exercised there, God is in him, God being love, and deigning to dwell in us. First it was the fact, God dwells in the saint, and as infinite, the saint in him. Now as to his enjoyment and privilege he dwells in God; and then as to the activity of love, God dwells in him. The first fact is this state, and the double blessedness of God Himself, and the activity of His love. All this is simple. Rich and eternal and pure life now enjoyed in joying in God Himself, and exercised as it was in Jesus, in love to His, and every sinner around.

We now come to the *third* step in this blessed chain of love. Herein is love perfected with us that we might have boldness for the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world. Love has looked on from the time of, our sin, looked in and dwelt in us by the way, and now tells the tale of its perfectness for that day, when God's judgment calls all in question but the fruit of His love. But how should this meet the day of judgment? Here love is perfected with us, we are as Christ is

298 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

who is the judge; what fear, then? Oh, how has love thought of us, from the state of sins and death right on to judgment, and given us to stand now, "in this world," as Christ Himself is before God. Who shall find fault in that! Shall Christ whom we are like, or God whose delight is in Him? We have boldness for the day of judgment. No place in which the Christian is so bold, when he knows his place in Christ. When we stand before His judgment-seat we shall be perfectly like Himself; and as He is, so are we *in this world*. Many a sincere person, I mean, sincere Christian, does not see this his place in Christ. He may say, I am a poor sinner, and the cross just suits me. Blessedly true. But change the phrase: I am a poor sinner, and the judgment-seat just suits me! That will not do. Yet we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ. (2 Cor. v. 10.) There we must be fit for the judge. A dirty man is fit to be washed, a debtor for one who comes to pay his debts, but a righteous person for a judgment-seat; and we have here the measure of this: Christ, who sits to judge, is my righteousness. When I appear there, I shall appear in glory, shall be like Him, bear His image, having been *raised* in glory—my vile body fashioned like His glorious body. Here there is no room for fear. Grace has

THE THOUGHTFULNESS OF DIVINE LOVE. 299

put the believer in Christ now, and through His work he is accepted in the Beloved; as He is so is the believer in this world. How can I fear if I am as Christ? Note, it is not as He *was*. He was without sin, knew no sin even when He was down here. If I say I have none, I deceive myself, and the truth is not in me. But my place before God is in Christ, not in the flesh. There is no condemnation for them who are in Christ Jesus. But as He *is*, now He has finished the work and by Himself purged our sins, having by one offering perfected for ever those who are sanctified, through the offering of His body once for all, and now as He *is*, so *are* we in this world, accepted in the Beloved. I repeat, what room is there for fear? Is not this love, perfect, thoughtful love, that in the place of judgment, there we find perfection? Then, I know I am like the judge, like the Lord in glory, like my Saviour. Gracious love that has thought of my sins, and spiritual death in them; blessed and blessing love, God's dwelling in me; and perfected love, in that I am as Christ, God's own Son, so that where surely fear might be, fear is cast out. Love has made me know now what love has done, and while it makes me enjoy itself now, God dwells in me and I in Him, makes me look back and see it active when I was a dead sinner, a love that flows from

300 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

itself out to me, so that I reckon on it, yea, learn its perfectness when I might fear, and find that love had counsels of infinite wonder, to make me as Christ the Son of God, a man in glory, and righteousness of divine perfection, even the one before whose judgment-seat I shall stand, like Him, His righteousness mine. Love has left nothing unthought of that could make me exalt God as infinite in grace, and enjoy His goodness in a righteousness which He has made mine. There is no fear in love. Where shall fear find a place, from my state of death in sins up to the judgment-seat of Christ? He cannot love me too much, but He cannot love me more, and my heart is at rest.

And note here, though we pass through it, and it is very natural that we should, yet *hope* as to the judgment day is not the true feeling of a believer at all. We hope because we see goodness, and know there is such a thing as redemption; and we fear because we see that there is that in us which cannot stand before the judgment of God. We vacillate, are ill at ease, and when the thought of judgment comes in, there is torment because there is fear. God would not have us so. He would not we should have torment. He would have us walk with Him happy, and in *confidence*. Fear is not confidence. But if we have to be judged, that is, our state decided according to our works

THE THOUGHTFULNESS OF DIVINE LOVE. 301

in that day (for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat), we shall certainly be condemned. Enter not, says the heart that knows what sin, and what flesh is in God's sight—enter not, into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord, for in Thy sight *shall no man living be justified*. But the believer has learned this as to himself before the judgment comes, and has fled for refuge to the hope set before him, and knows that redemption is as certain as complete, and divine righteousness as satisfactory, if I may use so feeble a word, as his condemnation was certain. He does not mix up as his portion judgment *for* sin, and redemption *from* sin. He owns fully the one and his own deserved condemnation, and believes fully in the other. He does not destroy the force of both by mixing them together. Judgment according to what he is, would, he knows, have been certain condemnation. Divine righteousness (and we are the righteousness of God in Christ) is necessary and perfect acceptance. Grace has given it to him, has made it his. As He is, so are we *in this world*, for we have it by faith, we have boldness in the day of judgment, and there is no fear in love, our portion is perfected in this. *Raised in glory*, he is manifested before the judgment-seat, but glorified before he is there, his vile body fashioned like Christ's glorious body, by that power which can subdue

302 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

all things to itself. Knowing then as he is known, he looks back from that blessedness, bearing the image of the heavenly, on the countless ways of love, which has brought a poor feeble creature, justified through Christ the Lord, all the way along, that he might know himself, and the love which has led, thought of, sustained, borne with, lifted up, and brought there to enjoy and praise, made like the Lord, the love that has done it, and to dwell in a holiness where no evil can enter, and which is only joy, and find Jesus the Lord of glory, the First-born among many brethren. We love Him because He first loved us. But oh, how imperfect are our thoughts of that day. Our part is to dwell in and think of Christ, to serve Him with an undivided heart here. J. N. D.



GOD'S KING.

(Continued.)

IN Psalm xxi. there is a very wonderful aspect of God's King.

The two preceding Psalms, which are closely connected with this one, are of great help to our souls in the present case, in leading us to understand the glorious subject: "The king shall joy in thy strength, O Jehovah."

There are three witnesses to the glory of God in the two Psalms (xix. and xx.), and their

testimony prepares the way for the king's position in Psalm xxi.

The heavens declare ; the law of Jehovah is perfect ; Jehovah saveth His anointed king. This would be a very brief summary of the preceding witness borne to God ; and in such a striking way that the attention of all must be aroused.

The creation has a voice for all ; the written word answers to the heart and soul (xix. 7, 8) ; and then the third witness, the *king*, is brought to us (xx.) : "Let the king hear us when we call." By the mouth of three witnesses shall every word be established.

It has often been said that Psalm xxi. is a full answer to the prayer : "Let the king hear us when we call," and this, no doubt, is right.

Although earthly blessing be in view here, and the full realisation of Israel's hope be the great subject, yet we who have the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and a calling on high, may well look at the King in His new position in Psalm xxi., with the crown of pure gold upon His head, exalted after His sufferings, as a man crowned with glory and honour. He is not King of the church, but the church cannot be indifferent to His glory (Rev. i. 5, 6) ; and the peculiar glories that surround this diadem shine out with fresh lustre each time we read this wonderful scripture, comparing with it Psalm xlv.

I recollect, as a child, being taken to see the

304 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Regalia, the emblems of the power of Great Britain, and being thoroughly disappointed in the jewels. But there is nothing to disappoint us in the crown of God's king ; it is the full answer to the moral merits of Psalm xx. ; the pure gold is God's own righteousness, as revealed from heaven.

In John xi. I think that Martha was in a similar state of soul to that of the remnant in Psalm xx. : "Save, Jehovah : let the king hear us." Martha said : "Whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, he will give thee ;" but she had not got to Psalm xxi., where the full response to faith's prayer is found in the exalted King.

The whole Psalm may be summed up as being the final complete witness of God's righteous ways. It would be a poor thing if we were to study prophetic scriptures so as to learn no more than the rise and fall of the Antichrist, and the details of the revolt of the nations in the dénouement of the world's history. The great thing for us in prophecy is to see the moral beauty of the great central Figure of all ; of the One who could patiently wait upon Jehovah the true King, but as yet uncrowned (Ps. xx.) ; and then seen in exaltation bearing the emblems of universal power, according to divine and heavenly justice. (Ps. xxi.) "He will hear him from his holy heaven."

The crown of thorns has disappeared, and the

THE PRECIOUS PERFUME.

305

crown of pure gold has replaced it. To sorrow, distress, and the sufferings of death comes the full answer of peace, life, and glory, "length of days for ever and ever;" and we anticipate that moment when the appearing shall be shewn of the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of Lords.

All question of government shall be settled when He shall appear into whose lips grace is poured, and who shall reign anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows.

It is blessedly true that we see Jesus already crowned with glory and honour, and also that our blessings and relations are of a far higher kind; but none the less do we look with admiration at the ways of God, and the sure accomplishment of them in perfect righteousness, as we anticipate the setting up of the throne of His King.

"Thou hast made him most blessed for ever."

E. L. B.



THE PRECIOUS PERFUME.

(EXODUS xxx. 34-38.)

IN the concluding paragraph of this most comprehensive chapter we have the "sweet spices tempered together, pure and holy." This surpassingly precious perfume presents to us the unmeasured and unmeasurable perfections of Christ. There was no special quantity of

306 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

each ingredient prescribed, because the graces that dwell in Christ, the beauties and excellencies that are concentrated in His adorable Person, are without limit. Nought save the infinite mind of Deity could scan the infinite perfections of Him in whom all the fulness of Deity dwelleth; and as eternity rolls along its course of everlasting ages, those glorious perfections will ever be unfolding themselves in the view of worshipping saints and angels. Ever and anon as some fresh beams of light shall burst forth from that central Sun of divine glory, the courts of heaven above, and the wide fields of creation beneath, shall resound with thrilling alleluias to Him who was, who is, and who ever shall be the object of praise to all the ranks of created intelligences.

But not only was there no prescribed quantity of the ingredients; we also read, "of each there shall be a like weight." Every feature of moral excellence found its one place and proper proportion in Christ. No one quality ever displaced or interfered with another; all was "tempered together, pure and holy," and emitted an odour so fragrant that none but God could appreciate it.

"And thou shalt beat some of it *very small*, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy."

THE PRECIOUS PERFUME.

307

There is uncommon depth and power in the expression "very small." It teaches us that every little movement in the life of Christ, every minute circumstance, every act, every word, every look, every feature, every trait, every lineament, emits an odour produced by an equal proportion—"a like weight" of all the divine graces that compose His character. The smaller the perfume was beaten, the more its rare and exquisite temper was manifested.

"And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof: it shall be unto thee holy for the Lord. Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people." This fragrant perfume was designed exclusively for Jehovah. Its place was "before the testimony." There is that in Jesus which only God could appreciate. True, every believing heart can draw nigh to His matchless Person, and more than satisfy its deepest and most intense longings; still after all God's redeemed have drunk to the utmost of their capacity; after angels have gazed on the peerless glories of the Man Christ Jesus, as earnestly as their vision is capable of; after all, there will be that in Him which God alone can fathom and enjoy. No human or angelic eye could duly trace the exquisitely minute parts of that holy perfume "beaten very small."

308 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Nor could earth afford a proper sphere in which
to emit its divine and heavenly odour.—C. H. M.

"Notes on Exodus."



KEPT AND LED.

KEPT in the hand of Jesus,
Hidden in Him we love,
Safe through the furnace shielded,
Kept for the rest above.

Kept on the stormy ocean,
Led o'er the rolling wave,
Calm midst tumultuous motion,
Led by the Mighty to save.

Kept 'mid life's tears and sorrows,
Led through a world of woe,
Kept for the bright to-morrow,
Led as we onward go.

Safe in Himself for ever,
Kept in His power within,
Led, for His blood redeemed us,
Blest, for we're one with Him.

Kept through the darkening hour,
Leaning on Jesu's breast,
Kept from the enemy's power,
Fill'd with eternal rest.

Kept for His shout of greeting,
Led to His home on high,
Waiting until we meet Him,
Kept, for He's ever nigh.

Kept for His joy in glory,
Watching to see His face,
Oh, 'tis a matchless story,
Oh, 'tis surpassing grace!

W. T. T.

FINALLY.

THIS word, used by the great apostle of the Gentiles five times in his letters, is suggestive in its connections of the close of another year, and of the termination with it of the writer's service in connection with this serial.

The word, as it stands by itself alone, outside of all connections, is a sad one as we use it in ordinary conversation: it indicates the end and wind up and finish of things here, all this belongs to that which is seen, to that which is temporal and fading away; it speaks of change and decay in all around, the dying year is the 'finally' of 1895; how blessed to know we are thus far nearer to that bright and blessed moment when His *shout of relationship* (κελεύσμα) will put in motion by His word all His own, living or sleeping in the tomb, so that raised or changed they rise to meet Him and to be with Him for ever. Thank God, there will be no finish to the rest and blessedness of that.

Let us just look at each of the five passages where we do find this valedictory exhortation.

1. Ephesians vi. 10: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord." This exhortation is in its own appropriate place where fighting is

310 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

in question ; you will find the same exhortation to being strong in the Lord in the Book of Joshua, spoken to him, too, by Jehovah Himself—it was not spoken to any other man in the history of Israel ; they were then in the very circumstances to have it addressed to Joshua : they were on the eve of taking possession of that which was then possessed by the enemy's gods. Further, that in which their strength alone could lie is very blessedly expressed in the words, “in *the Lord*, and in *the power of his might*.”

2. The second passage in moral order, too, as I judge, is Philippians iv. 8. Here it is the power of the heart *being occupied with good* ; the Lord knows the terrible tendency of our poor hearts to be occupied with evil, hence the apostle's exhortation. It is very blessed to have the habit of living in what is good in this world, where we are constantly compelled to have to do with what is evil, to have the heart toned and tuned to take delight in those things that God delights in. Further, you will notice here that this walk in the delight of heart in what is good, is in the power of the life of Christ given, and the flesh *reckoned dead* ; another has said : “If I look to walk after Christ, I must reckon myself dead. I never say I must die, because this would be to suppose the flesh there working ; of course it is there, but

FINALLY.

311

I say it is dead. . . . The spring from which all power is, that you have died."

3. If you turn to 2 Thessalonians iii. 1, you will find the third instance of the use of this word in another connection. "Finally, brethren, pray for us." Here it is the desire of the apostle's soul to be upheld by the prayers of the Thessalonian Christians; it supposes their habit of dependence on God, by which he longed to be sustained in his ministry; it is very sweet to see here the expression on the one hand of confidence in God, in seeking to be thus remembered by them before Himself; and on the other, the confidence of his heart in their love and affection. "Finally, brethren, pray for us."

4. This instance is in Philippians iii. 1, it is "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord." It is such a suited termination of an epistle, where the word joy (*χαρά*), in many variations of the word, is continually found. This is made all the more striking when we remember that the letter is *from prison*, so that every external circumstance which could in any way be supposed to contribute to this blessed servant of Christ in his exile was excluded; there was nothing in the prison walls of Nero's dungeon to minister to his joy; but there are three little words here which reveal the secret and explain the word *alway* in chapter iv. 4: these are golden

312 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

words, may we take them in and prove their blessedness and power—"in the Lord"—here is an unfailing and unchanging ground of comfort and delight, here are no clouds or shadows, here it is all clear shining of the sun. Dear reader, may we know and enter into it.

5. The last instance is 2 Corinthians xiii. 11. Here it is what we may call purely valedictory, his loving farewell (χαίρετε): "Finally, brethren, rejoice." This is one of the foremost among those described in Galatians v. 22, as fruit of the Spirit; but he says further, "be perfect"—the meaning of this is *the fitting together* as the pieces in a mosaic (καταρτίζεσθε); but there is more, "be of good comfort." This is as in the midst of many dangers, temptations, and sorrows around them. Alas! there is on every side abundance to cast down and overwhelm the spirit, how blessed to find even the smallest encouragement (for that is the force of the word παρακαλέω) in the sense that there is one who is *called to your side*, and is on your behalf and for you through it all. Oh, that we may rejoice in all the blessed consolation this imparts. Further, he says, "be of one mind"—that is, *think the same thing* (τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖτε). What an exhortation! And who but the blessed Spirit of God, in ungrieved power in the souls of His own, could bring about such sameness of mind and heart amid the endless contrarieties

LIFE, LEADING AND WALK, ETC. 313

and divergence of thought and view existing at this time.

Once more mark his words, "*live in peace*"—that is, let peace be the atmosphere of your life. It is well to remember that peace without with others flows from peace within; it is thus that we are sandalled as to our feet. May it be so with all who read these words. Lastly, note the promise, "and the God of love and peace shall be with you." His companionship and presence are thus pledged all along the way.

The Lord grant to all my readers a very distinct sense of such blessed help and stay, for Christ's sake. "Finally, brethren, farewell."

W. T. T.



LIFE, LEADING AND WALK BY THE SPIRIT.

(GALATIANS V. 7-26.)

EVERY justified person receives the gift of the Holy Ghost. We are justified when we *believe on God* who raised up Jesus our Lord from among the dead, "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." In the person of Jesus, as raised from among the dead, now known by the soul as the *Lord* Jesus, we have a man by whom death has

314 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

been annulled, and who, by resurrection, has entered upon a new state, and passed into a new position. Life and incorruptibility, "promised afore by his prophets in holy writings," have now been brought to light. God, the offended One, has been satisfied with respect to every claim which He had against the believer ; the judgment of death, which was lying upon him, has been borne, the proof of which lies in the fact that He has raised the believer's substitute from the dead ; thus we start with a clear field, every question between us and God being settled, so that "we have *peace with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ." Another Man is now before the eye of God, in whom God finds and in whom is displayed His intense satisfaction, and life is in that Man, the One through whom I am justified, in whom I have life and to whom I now belong ; He is *my Lord*. God can now give me the Holy Ghost, seal me as belonging to Himself, according to the efficacy of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, and the first experience which I have by the Holy Ghost is of the love of God which "is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us." It is the first mention which we have of the Spirit in the Epistle to the Romans. How important it is to see that this is the real start in the Christian course, and the importance of the reception of the Holy Ghost by the believer cannot be

LIFE, LEADING AND WALK, ETC. 315

exaggerated, for there is no limit to what He can do in us and by us if He be but ungrieved. The believer is a vessel of the Spirit, who has come to report to us the glory of Christ and to conduct us to Him.

The next mention which we have of the Spirit is in chapter viii. 2, only there it is rather the law or rule of that Spirit which is spoken of,—“the *law* of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” The life itself is in Christ Jesus, and the Spirit in us is the Spirit of that life. The gift of the Spirit is spoken of in chapter v., life in Christ Jesus referred to in chapter vi. 11, we being entitled not only to reckon ourselves dead to sin, but also alive to God in (not “through”) Christ Jesus, and in chapter viii. 2 the Spirit is spoken of as the Spirit of that life, the apostle telling us there what the *law* of that Spirit had done for him,—“*made me free* from the law of sin and death;” and what it had done for him it can, and will do for all who have that same Spirit, provided we walk according to it, for it is the regularly operating, unvarying rule of it; it is the Spirit alone which frees us from the law of sin and death. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” The seventh chapter gives us the experience of a soul under law and therefore under the dominion of sin, for the law is the strength of sin; renewed as to its will, delighting in the law of God after the inward man, but

316 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

finding no power to be what it recognised it should be, because of not having the Spirit ; one born anew no doubt, but not yet justified and therefore not having the Spirit ; it is a soul learning the perversity of its own natural will, the utter depravity of the flesh, and its own inherent weakness. It is the experience of one in the flesh, in the standing and condition of a child of Adam, in contrast with the Christian state, as may be seen by a comparison of chapter vii. 5 : " For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law," etc , with chapter viii. 9 : " But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." " If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin ; but *the Spirit is life* because of righteousness." We could not predicate of any one that he is new-born, however hopeful we might be that there was a work of God in the soul, until such an one had believed " the gospel of your salvation " (see Ephes. i. 13), whereupon the Holy Ghost would be given him, and the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of life in the believer. (Gal. v. 25.) " If we live in the Spirit " is also confirmatory of this. New birth is the initial and sovereign operation of God in a soul, apart from which no one would receive Christ, and the Holy Ghost is the sovereign gift of grace to all who do receive Him, only it must be borne in mind that He must be received now

LIFE, LEADING AND WALK, ETC. 317

according to the truth as to Him at the present moment, and He has been raised from among the dead and glorified. Now one who has life in the Spirit is also "*led* by the Spirit," it is part of His gracious office to lead us, and we may be sure that if we give ourselves up to His leading He will lead us in the path of God's will ; we could not think of His leading us contrary to God's holy law ; one who was so led would certainly satisfy the righteous requirement of that law, and yet such an one would not be under law, for it is written, "if ye be led of the Spirit, *ye are not under the law.*" (Gal. v. 18.) The Galatians had gone back to the ground of the law, thinking to correct and keep in check the passions and lusts of the flesh by its means, forgetful of the fact that the mind of the flesh is *not subject* to the law of God, neither indeed can be ; and too that they, if they were Christ's, had crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts, had professedly accepted what God had effected for them in the death of Christ, "namely" that our old man *has been crucified* with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." They were reviving what God never revives, and that with the view of improving it, and the apostle has to demonstrate to them the incorrigible nature of the flesh, in that it sets itself in opposition to the Spirit who indwells the

318 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

believer, and lusts against it, so as to hinder him from doing what the Spirit would lead him to do. The Holy Ghost has taken possession of the believer and indwells him on the ground of the complete setting aside of the flesh and its judicial ending in the cross of Christ, and not only is it true of him that, as led of the Spirit, he is not under law, but it is also true that "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are *the sons of God*" (Rom. viii. 14); and to say that we are sons is equivalent to saying we are in liberty, for the next verse shows that the Spirit of adoption, or sonship, is in contrast with the spirit of bondage, and Galatians iv. 7 is to the same effect, where it is written, "Wherefore thou art no more a servant (bondman), but *a son*." To be under law is to be under bondage to sin, for "the strength of sin is the law." Under law was the condition of saints before the accomplishment of the work of redemption and consequent gift of the Spirit. The Christian has both life and liberty, for he has the Spirit. Both the one and the other are most distinctly connected in scripture with the possession of the Spirit.

But *walking in the Spirit* is another thing, this is clearly the Christian's *responsibility*, and it is only as he is walking in the Spirit that he is practically free from the control of the flesh, as we find in Galatians v. 16, "this I say then,

LIFE, LEADING AND WALK, ETC. 319

Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." The fact which we have in the passage which follows this verse, "the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh," shews its incorrigible nature, and that the two powers are antagonistic but, walking in the Spirit I am superior, for, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus *has made me free* from the law of sin and death." There is no other way of practically enjoying the liberty to which we are entitled, as dead with Christ to sin in Romans vi. and dead with Him to law in chapter vii., but by *walking in the Spirit*. Walking in the Spirit the fruit of the Spirit is produced in us, "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness," etc. etc., and "against such there is no law." May we be found bringing forth this blessed fruit in rich abundance and an ever increasing measure, not through any effort on our part, but as the simple and blessed result of *walking in the Spirit*. It is with Christ the Spirit occupies us, and thus we are delivered from the baneful effects of self-occupation.

T. H.



“*STAND FAST,*” “*HOLD,*” “*HIMSELF.*”

(2 THESS. II. 15, 16.)

WE are rapidly nearing the wind up of the last days, and the tendency of the moment is to remove from under our feet the foundations of truth. There is nothing that the enemy has not assailed in his supreme hatred of Christ, thank God, he has not in the most remote degree touched anything in this assault; the truth abides and shines even more brightly when the din of the attack is over; there is never any fear as to the faith, the danger lies in the direction of our not standing fast as to it, of our not having our feet, as it were, firmly fixed upon that firm foundation of God which abides. In the case of the Thessalonian believers, to whom the epistle was written, the words derive special force in connection with what had been spoken of in verses 11, 12, concerning the Antichrist—the “*lie*”—in which all previous delusions of Satan are consummated in view of his coming, the Holy Ghost through the apostle says, *stand firm*.

Again, he also says, “*hold fast.*” The great aim of the enemy is to induce us to *surrender*, whatever may be the plea or pretext; these are various and most skilfully adjusted to the particular time and occasion; the devil’s great

“STAND FAST,” “HOLD,” “HIMSELF.” 321

effort is to seduce God's people to let go what they have, for something supposed to be far superior; “clearer light” and “advanced truth” are, alas! too often the bait that cover his hook. Oh, may we be on our guard, watchful, not ignorant of his service, and seeking grace and strength from Him persistently to *hold fast*.

It is interesting to note that here, as well as in 1 Corinthians xv. 58; Colossians i. 23, *hope* is the great incentive to steadfastness.

The last word which heads this paper is the sweetest and most precious to the heart that has known and believed His love; that word carries with it all the blessedness of a Person who is worthy to entwine all the affections of His people's hearts—“*Himself*.” Ah, how well we know there is no other than He, Himself, “Jesus himself,” “Himself the Lord.” There is no coldness or distance in that unfolding, it is a revelation to the *heart* of a Person such as the heart alone can appreciate with delight. Yes, thank God, “*Christ is all things*.”

That which adds to the tenderness of these words is the use the blessed Lord made of what is so connected with His own Person in His converse with His disciples, both during His blessed life on earth as well as after His resurrection; for instance, how comforting and soothing it must have been to the sorrow-stricken hearts of the poor disciples, to hear

322 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Him say to them in John xiv. 3: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto *myself*." Was not that just the very balm for their grief at that moment? How well we can conceive that one of the pangs that pierced their hearts at that moment were such questions as these, that would rise continually. Would they ever see Him again? Would that blessed intercourse of three years be ever resumed? Would there be recognition and association in the new and unknown world into which He was about to depart from them? They did not know where He was going: "Lord, we know not whither thou goest;" "Lord, whither goest thou?" These words tell the secret of the cloud that spread its cold damp over their broken hearts. He Himself, and He alone, knew how to meet *that*, and hence He says that if He went away, He would come again and take (*παραλήψομαι*) them to Himself—the very word for that moment for them was just that—"MYSELF." Oh, how it would not fail to distil its own healing, soothing cheer; He would come again and take them to Himself. Observe the word rendered receive is really take, it is *παραλήψομαι*, from two Greek words, meaning 'to take near with,' or 'to one's self.' It implies He would take them *into all the nearness and affection of His own blessed Person*. Further, observe what He says later

“STAND FAST,” “HOLD,” “HIMSELF.” 323

on in this chapter as to manifesting Himself. To the faithful, dependent one He says, “I will manifest *myself* to him.” I dare not say a word as to my poor apprehension of all that is implied in that one blessed word, “*manifest* ;” but I believe that it conveys this, that in manifestation all is gone but Christ Himself. Oh, how blessed that would be ; the heart conscious of nothing but Himself.

But after His great atoning work was finished and He was risen from the dead, we find the same thing. In Luke xxiv. 39 we hear Him reassuring His poor disciples in these words : “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I *myself* : handle me, and see ; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.”

How blessed to see Him in resurrection thus assuring His poor, timid, trembling ones in those blessed words, “it is myself ;” so that before He departed out of this world to the Father, He tells His sorrowing ones that He would come again and receive them unto Himself ; then having died and risen again from the dead, He stills their fears by pointing to Himself, and now while the church is still expectant, and His own who are devoted to Him in His absence eagerly look for the bright morning to dawn, the blessed Spirit announces the consummation of all true expectancy in these words : “Himself the Lord shall descend from heaven

324 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord"—*Himself*. (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.)

"Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God even our Father, which hath loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work."

W. T. T.



SERVICE.

IT is comparatively easy to distinguish whether a thing is right or wrong; it is not so easy to know how it may or may not be done. And in things divine it is of first importance to draw this distinction.

In natural things, even when, in a general way, the authority of God is owned, it is thought sufficient to know of a thing that it is, as we say, right; that is to say, that it does not contravene any notions we have acquired as to what is right; it may even be in accord with a precept laid down by God Himself. I say when God's authority is owned,

SERVICE.

325

for there may be a general submission to His authority as supreme, without that constant reference to His will by which alone His mind may momentarily be known, and without which, though right may be gauged, the right thing for the moment cannot be understood. And, let it be remarked, this is not the same thing as having bad or mixed motives, though considered deeply, an affinity might be proved; but bad motives lead to introspection, self instead of God occupies the heart; what it is important to see is, that God may be known, His authority over life, taken as a whole, owned, joy, gratitude to Christ may fill the heart, and yet God's mind for the moment be unread, and hence all be done wrong, though arising from the best of motives.

Now service is, or should be, a manifestation of life, life in Christ. An illustration of this is given by Paul in his address to the saints at Rome; commencing with the high and blessed ground of God's sovereignty and grace, "a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God," he goes on to say, "for God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit," &c.; the start is a good one, "called and separated;" the language is decisive, does not leave a shadow of doubt; but the point is that it is not sufficient for more than a start; and consequently he goes on to say, "whom

326 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

I serve with my spirit." The start is the result of God's intervention, and the service is the result of this, plus constant communion with God's mind ; he begins with God, and he goes on with God. It may be said, in passing, that the start is of all importance ; unless we start from God's sovereignty we shall never have confidence in what we do (though we may keep a good conscience). But this is not what occupies us now.

Surely each one of us must feel, and feel deeply, that there is nothing about which it is easier to get wrong ideas than service ; and with wrong ideas about service, though we may be instruments, we shall never be servants. In natural things service would, I suppose, spring in the main from gratitude, gratitude to a benefactor ; if any one does great things for me, I like to make him some return, and rightly so. This is human gratitude. Now in divine things service is eminently and primarily the result of obedience, itself the result of love, and that love the love of Christ : "The love of Christ constraineth us." It is not that love, gratitude, affection do not enter into service, far be the thought ; it is not that service is the mere result of obeying a precept, an equally horrible idea ; but it is the essentiality of the principle and moral order that is important—namely, love, obedience, service.

SERVICE.

327

“Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected ;” “If any man will do his will, he shall know,” &c.

Obedience lays the foundation for knowledge and service. So with the Lord Himself: “Lo, I come : in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God : yea, thy law is within my heart.” He took upon Himself the form of a servant, and His meat was to do the will of God. Service is not my will, chastened by the thought of all I owe to my Saviour, tempered and attenuated by affection ; but His will. And here lies the difference between the human and the divine. Will then has no place ; for I might will to do His will, and by making a law of Christ in this way, still be wrong ; or I may see a saint do something which I perceive to be right, and even blessed of God, and go and do the same thing myself ; his action being done in obedience, mine in disobedience, so that still all is wrong.

To choose service is, of course, wrong ; but knowing what is to be done, it is possible to choose one's own time and manner of doing it, and so go wrong. And granting all this, how easy it is to get wrong in one's own soul, not necessarily to turn the back on Christ, but to slip away, as it were, with the face still turned towards Him, the eyes perhaps shifting

328 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

to one side or the other. How will this affect service? The flesh will be called on to keep us up to our attainments; the flesh is made to do the work of the Spirit, and who will say that it is not ready to do so? This is the deep meaning of the flesh lusting against the Spirit, though there may be a more general application; not the flesh and the spirit pitted against one another, as it were, each striving in an opposite direction, but the flesh eagerly watching its chance to insinuate itself and do the Spirit's work. What Christian does not know this? Furthermore, we know that this spirit of imitation, the flesh counterfeiting the Spirit, will increase, eventually reaching its consummation in the setting up of Antichrist—a counterfeit Christ—so that is not something we have to grow out of, but something, the tendency to which will increase day by day.

Service is individual, essentially and necessarily individual; not that there is no fellowship in service, which would be a terrible thought; but primarily it is individual, totally independent for its efficiency and maintenance of association; fellowship will always be found, but this is another thing.

Organised service is what we get in the systems, and it is easy to see it is unscriptural; but what a real temptation it is to take up with a line of things, to run in a groove, and perhaps

"THE GOLD WIRE."

329

to be efficient in it, and yet to be generally inefficient. This is not denying gifts, which will be special, shewing themselves in a special direction ; but when led towards a certain line by gift, how subtle is the snare that would engross us with that line, to the detriment of general readiness : the true servant will be generally ready, though his gift lead him in one direction.

One thing more might be said. There is no loophole for legality or effort. We have seen service to be the true manifestation of a new life, not the result of a charmed, grateful, affectionate flesh ; love is the prime source ; not law or necessity, unless indeed the necessity of love ; but obedience is its immediate moral instigator ; not obedience to a precept, but obedience to a constraining love.

God give us purpose of heart to cleave to Himself, and may we only fear what comes between our souls and Him.

E. G. M.



"THE GOLD WIRE."

(EXODUS XXXIX. 3.)

IN "the fine twined linen" we have a type of the spotless manhood of the Lord Jesus Christ ; and in the "gold wire" we have an equally striking

330 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

and beautiful type of His Godhead. The Spirit of God delights in presenting the Person and work of Christ. Every type, every figure, every ordinance of the Mosaic ritual, is fragrant with the odour of His precious name. It matters not how insignificant, apparently, the circumstances may be, if only it expresses something of Christ, it is unspeakably valuable in the judgment of the Holy Ghost. "The blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen" exhibit the varied features of Christ's perfect humanity ; but the manner in which the gold wire was mingled with these materials, in making Aaron's priestly garments, is worthy of special attention. The wire of gold was cunningly wrought into all the others so as to be inseparably connected with, and yet perfectly distinct from them. The application of all this to the Lord Jesus is full of interest. In varied scenes throughout the gospel narrative we can easily discern this rare and beauteous union of manhood and Godhead ; and at the same time, their mysterious distinctness.

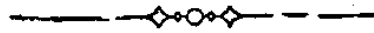
Look for example at Christ on the sea of Galilee. Again see Him in the case of the collectors of tribute at the close of Matthew xvii. Once more see Him at the grave of Lazarus. (John xi.) My reader's mind will easily recur to other scenes in the gospels, illustrative of the beautiful combination of the wire of gold with "the blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine

"THROUGH HIM THAT LOVED US." 331

twined linen," that is to say, the union of the Godhead with the Manhood in the mysterious Person of the Son of God. There is nothing new in the thought. It has often been noticed by those who have studied, with any amount of care, the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

C. H. M.

"Notes on Exodus."



"THROUGH HIM THAT LOVED US."

(ROMANS VIII. 37.)

THROUGH Him that loved us, tho' the way be weary,
 Tho' fiercest tribulations round us come,
 And tho' the midnight may be dark and dreary,
 Through Him that loved us we shall reach our home.

Tho' deep distress and anguish hath oppress'd us
 And every earthly hope be rent away ;
 On the deep love which saved us and which bless'd us,
 Through Him that loved us, we may find our stay.

When persecution comes our weakest hours assailing,
 And rages as a storm upon the wall ;
 With that deep love unchanging and unfailing,
 Through Him that loved us, we can bear it all.

In time of famine, lo ! He safely guides us,
 And in green pastures we are gently led,
 A loving heart, a bounteous hand provides us ;
 Through Him that loved us, we shall still be fed.

Tho' life may strip us of our every blessing,
 And leave us naked, friendless, and alone,

332 HELPS IN THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.

In Him enough for every need possessing,
Through Him that loved us, heaven is all our own.

Tho' peril comes to meet us, death, or sorrow,
It will but drive us closer to His side,
And make us long the more for that to-morrow,
When He who loves us comes to claim His bride.

And what from that deep love our souls can sever?
Not life—tho' heart may fail and eye grow dim,
And our strength wasted, in the vain endeavour
To walk as worthy of a look from Him.

Life cannot part us, no, nor death nor sadness,
Nor aught in earth beneath or heaven above;
He gives to our poor hearts the holy gladness
Of knowing naught can part us from His love.

So let us walk this world with hearts o'erflowing
With love to Him, no matter what befall;
And bear our sorrows patiently, well knowing
Through Him that loved us, we shall conquer all

—Extracted and adapted.



London: G. MORRISH, 20, Paternoster Square.