

their brethren to go up and possess the land with their, 'We are well able to overcome; if the Lord delight in us, then HE WILL BRING US into this land,'—were the atmosphere which the young believer breathes as he enters the fellowship of the saints that of a healthy, trustful, joyful consecration, abiding in Christ would come as the natural outgrowth of being in Him. But in the sickly state in which such a great part of the body is, souls that are pressing after this blessing are sorely hindered by the depressing influence of the thought and the life around them. It is not to discourage that I say this, but to warn, and to urge to a more entire casting of ourselves upon the word of God Himself. There may come more than one hour in which thou art ready to yield to despair; but be of good courage. Only believe. He who has put the blessing within thy reach will assuredly lead to its possession.

The way in which souls enter into the possession may differ. To some it may come as the gift of a moment. In times of revival, in the fellowship with other believers in whom the Spirit is working effectually, under the leading of some servant of God who can guide, and sometimes in solitude too, it is as if all at once a new revelation comes upon the soul. It sees, as in the light of heaven, the strong Vine holding and bearing the feeble branches so securely, that doubt becomes impossible. It can only wonder how it ever could have understood the words to mean aught else than this: To abide unceasingly in Christ is the portion of every believer. It sees it; and to believe, and rejoice, and love, come as of itself.

To others it comes by a slower and more difficult path. Day by day, amid discouragement and difficulty, the soul has to press forward. Be of good cheer; this way too leads to rest. Seek but to keep thy heart set upon the promise: 'I THE LORD DO KEEP IT, night and day.' Take from His own lips the watchword: 'Every moment.' In that thou hast the law of His love, and the law of thy hope. Be content with nothing less. Think no longer that the duties and the cares, that the sorrows and the sins of this life must succeed in hindering the abiding life of fellowship. Take rather for the rule of thy daily experience the language of faith: I am persuaded that neither death with its fears, nor life with its cares, nor things to come with their dark shadows, nor height of joy, nor depth of sorrow, nor any other creature shall be able for one single moment to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, and in which he is teaching me to abide. If things look dark and faith would fail, sing again the song of the vineyard; 'I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.' And be assured that, if Jehovah keep the branch night and day, and water it every moment, a life of continuous and unbroken fellowship with Christ is indeed our privilege.

THRONGING AND TOUCHING.

BY WAYLAND HOYT, D.D.

The Master had just returned from the other side of the little lake. On this side he is met by a man who falls at his feet with a great burden on his heart, and a great prayer upon his lip. Yonder in the city, his little daughter is sinking into death. He has done all he can for her; but everything has failed. Hope has faded everywhere else; it shines now only around the Master. This is his burden and his prayer: "My little daughter lieth at the point of death, I pray thee come and lay thy hands on her that she may be healed, and she shall live." The Master, whose life was a perpetual answer to prayer, hears the man, yields to his cry, and begins to follow him.

Meanwhile, a great crowd is gathering. They are gathered by all the influences which call a

crowd—curiosity, interest in the stricken man of the synagogue, interest in the wonderful teacher, who is so in kin with men that somehow they always troop to him as the birds do to the Summer.

The crowd is dense and unwieldy, and swaying back and forth as crowds do, and blocking up the path, and rendering advance difficult. In a rude, eager way it forces itself against, and presses itself upon, and throngs and jostles Jesus walking in the centre.

Then a woman thrusts herself through the mass, clearing for herself a difficult course through it, with a most eager and determined, yet withal, with a thronging and half-fearing look and motion, striving to get into some neighborhood with Jesus. She accomplishes her object; then she reaches forth her hand and touches the long fringe upon the corners of the Master's robe. And then, as though that were all she wanted, turns, hastening to get away.

Now, the thing to be noticed is, that that touch seems to establish at once a union between that woman and the Lord. The woman is diseased, and at the moment of that touch she is conscious of cure. And amid all the pressing and thronging of the crowd the Saviour recognizes the touch and distinguishes it, is strangely sensitive to it, and yields, because of it, a healing energy. It is as though all the crowd were absent, and only the Saviour and that woman stood together.

"Who touched me?" asked the Saviour, turning around. "Did you? Did you?"

And when all denied, Peter answers: "Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, Sayest thou, who touched me?"

But the Master replies: "Somebody hath touched me; for I perceive that a healing energy hath gone forth from me."

A relation between Christ and that woman has been established. There they stand together in the isolation of that relation. All the crowd has thronged Christ; only this poor woman has touched Christ. They who throng, though, doubtless, many of them are diseased, are still unhealed. The woman touches and is cured at once.

And so it must be one thing to throng Christ and another thing to touch him.

I am sure that the multitude on the road there, between the Sea of Galilee and the City of Capernaum, with Jesus in the centre of it, with the multitude thronging him, eager to see him, with that poor woman pressing her way through that crowd to touch him, establishing by that means between himself and herself a most singular deep relation—I am sure that this scene, which I have rudely sketched, is a perfect symbol and representation of the world to-day.

For, say what you will, the world throngs Christ to-day. Say what you will Christ is the centre of the world's interest and thought to-day. Men have tried to explain away the Christ. They have said he was a myth. They have said he was an enthusiast. They have said that he was only a man, possessing a wonderful genius for religion. They have brought all the enginery of criticism to bear upon him. They have devised countless theories to account for him. And yet he stands the central fact of the world's history, the grand problem for the world's solution, the gathering point of the world's interest, the controlling force in the world's life.

What think ye of Christ, Historian, Philosopher, Theologian, Statesman, Heterodox, Orthodox, Romanist, Protestant, Rationalist, Ritualist? What think ye of Christ? is the great question which the world has been asking itself, which the world keeps asking itself, which the world cannot help asking itself. The world is thronging Christ.

For, consider the singularity and diverseness of this Christ from all others upon whom the sun has shone. What dignity of claim, what augustness of life, what grandeur of power!

He comes assuming for himself a most unique position. He comes claiming to be something more than the founder of a new religion. He promulgates doctrine; but he puts himself at the centre of his doctrine. He brings to us revelation; but he himself is the sun whence the revealing streams. "I am the bread of life." "I am the good shepherd." "I am the resurrection and the life." "Come unto me and I will give you rest." "He that believeth in me shall have everlasting life." Daring like this has always been beyond the presumption of any man.

He comes substantiating his claims by a sinless life. His life is the one thoroughly pure ray in the world's darkness. He stands before the world and bares his breast and challenges, Which of you convinceth me of sin? And the only answer which the world can find for the Sinless One is worship.

He comes setting up a kingdom which stands larger and firmer as ages pass. "Can you tell me who Jesus Christ was?" asked Napoleon, at St. Helena. "Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and I myself have founded great empires; but upon what did these creations of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded his empire upon love; and to this very day millions would die for him. I think I understand something of human nature, and I tell you all these were men, and I am a man; none else is like him. Jesus Christ was more than man. I have inspired multitudes with such enthusiastic devotion that they would have died for me; but to do this it was necessary that I should be visibly present, with the electric influence of my looks, of my voice, of my words. When I saw men and spoke to them, I lighted up a flame of self-devotion in their hearts. Christ alone has succeeded in so raising the mind of man toward the unseen that it becomes insensible to the barriers of time and space. Across a chasm of eighteen hundred years Jesus Christ makes a demand which is, beyond all others, difficult to satisfy. He asks for the human heart; he will have it entirely to himself. He demands it unconditionally; and, forthwith, his demand is granted. Wonderful. In defiance of time and space the soul of man, with all its powers and faculties, becomes an annexation to the empire of Christ. This it is that strikes me most. I have often thought of it." So supreme and mighty is the power of Jesus Christ over men.

And now this Jesus Christ, this singular and separate being, so authoritative in claim, shining with such purity of life, so imperial in power, the world cannot help thinking about, inquiring about, gathering around, thronging. Christ is in human history. Christ is the most stupendous fact in human history. As such he challenges and compels attention. Gather around him in attention and interest men must—just as that crowd gathered around him on the road between the Sea of Galilee and Capernaum. The world does throng Christ.

And yet it is easy enough to see that just as the presence of the Master in that crowd divided the multitude into two classes, those who throng and she who touched, so now to-day, Christ as a great fact and presence, divides the world into two classes—they who simply throng, and they who deeply touch.

To those who touch him Christ is vastly more than he is to those who throng him. There is formed between him and them a most intimate and personal relation. They are conscious of a spiritual healing through this touching of him. Their need has touched his fulness.

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