

Our Contributors.

The Compassion of our Lord,

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If this great, weary, sin-sick world could only realize how God loves it, with what a deep tender heart of compassion He regards it, it would be converted at once.

In Psalm 145: 8, we are told that "God is full of compassion," again that His compassions are new every morning, and fail not. But how few even of His children realize it. How often we think of God as hard, cruel, and indifferent to our sorrows and needs. Have you ever noticed in summer an ant colony, and watched the business activities, the little wars, the winning and losing of one side or the other, but they were little more to you than the sands they disturbed. Is it not true that many of us think that God looks upon this greater ant hill, and beholds the thousand conflicts of human experiences with just as little thought and care? Ah! we have forgotten that prophet and apostle tell us that our God is not indifferent and without sympathy for the trying experiences of men. For do we not read "In all their afflictions He was afflicted" (Isa. 63: 9), and His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel (Judges 10: 16). "We have not an High Priest that cannot be touched" (Heb. 4: 15). Let us, therefore, come boldly to the throne of grace, and find grace to help in time of need."

Jesus Christ was God's manifestation of Himself to the world, Christ was God manifested in the flesh. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. Jesus was Emmanuel—"God with us." So, if we want to know what God is like, we have but to look at Jesus in the Gospels. We judge of the character of a person by their actions; let us from the life of Christ see something of the character of our Lord in His dealings with men. Never man spake as this man, was the verdict of His enemies. Never man acted as this man in His thoughtful, tender compassion—may this be the verdict of His friends ere this reading is over.

Even the names that the Holy Ghost gives Him are significant, and suggestive of marvellous tenderness. He is called "The Son of David," so expressive of His condescension, taking our nature, so that in all points, He might feel temptation. This title is used over eighty times in the Gospels, by our Lord only of Himself. Only sixty-five times is He called "The Son of God." It is singular that the words also occur about eighty times in Ezekiel. How full of humiliation, linking Himself with frail man. Was it not that He might feel the sorrows, disappointments, and weaknesses of life? How it emphasizes kinship with man. It sums up all the qualities of man in Himself, the pattern man, as originally made by God. Twenty-six times in the Revelation, He is called "The Lamb." Often the word has a diminutive meaning, a tender, or delicate lamb. We never associate anything harsh, cruel, or unkind with a lamb.

Some think the old Mosaic law cold and loveless, but in it may be found many a word that tells of the gentle heart of God. Every seven years the people were to let their farms rest, that the poor might eat the fruits that grew upon them. They were also taught to be mindful of the needy in harvest time, and not reap too closely the corners of their fields, nor glean their vineyards too carefully,

picking every grape. In Eastern lands, the widow and the orphan are peculiarly desolate and defenceless. In the midst of a dreary chapter of laws, we come upon a gleam of divine gentleness—"Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child;" (Exo. 22: 22).

It is noticed that the first appearance of the angel of the Lord i. e. of the Lord Jesus was to a slave, a woman and one in distress. (Gen. 16: 11). His first revelation to Moses was: "I know their sorrows, and am come down to deliver them." (Exo. 3: 7).

He could rejoice with them in their prosperity, but when His people were in sorrow, He just came in person to reassure them. How like a mother with her child. When the child is well, though far away, gifts and love-messages may be sent, and the heart rest contented, but let the child be ill, neither distance by land or sea, or any obstacle can keep that Mother from the child. She would fly if she could "over land and sea."

God's Book is indeed a Book for the sorrowful. Its sweetest messages are to those who need comfort, or to those who have fallen. It is a book of love and sympathy—no wonder that its author is a God of compassion. Its promises are like a mother's bosom, to lay one's head upon in time of distress and pain. Its pages team with cheer for the discouraged. It sets its lighted lamp of hope to shine in darkened chambers. It reaches out hands of help to the fainting, and those who are out of the way.

A beautiful picture of His compassion we find in Isa. 40: 11, the Good Shepherd carrying the lambs in His bosom. Young convert, weak believer, tried and stumbling one, wherever you are, here is a message for you. Nothing is so weak, tottering, or helpless as a lamb, but the shepherd carries them. No need to fear then, if you are a lamb of His fold. A mother told her two little girls one Sunday afternoon to not only learn the twenty-third Psalm, but to tell her what parts of it meant. So Mamie said to Katie: "Yes, He feeds them, and drives away the lions and bears." "Yes," said Katie, who had always been a delicate child, "He carries them up the steep hills when they are tired."

In His teaching, how seldom the law, or a harsh word was used, how little of the spirit of "thou shalt," and "thou shalt not," or of the do and go spirit, but rather "come unto me." How soothing, after years of "this do, and thou shalt live," according to the old law and the prophets, the gracious words of Gospel grace, which fell from His lips. They must have sparkled like dew on a summer's morning, and like a shower upon the thirsty souls with life-giving power. (Matt. 11: 28, 29).

Again, He never crowded new truth upon His disciples and hearers faster than they could bear; they were stupid, and slow understanding, and we might have supposed He would have said: "Well, I cannot make them understand, and there's no use trying. But He takes the trouble to illustrate His teachings with "stories" (Mar. 4: 33).

He is still the same, and will guide us into all truth. If we would only take our Bibles, and say, as I saw once on a book-mark, "Dear Jesus let us read this book together," what nuggets we would find, and how the truth would be revealed.

Notice too the delicacy with which He taught, taking the disciples apart from the

multitude to teach them, because they were to be teachers, and He did not want to display their ignorance (Mar. 4: 34). So we must be alone with Him, if He would expound His word, and tell us His secrets.

How mindful He was of the feelings of His little band, so as not to cause them undue sorrow. "I have many things to say unto you but ye cannot bear them now." He fed with His own hand milk and not meat, until they were able to bear it. Never was the Great Teacher too weary to speak to lost souls, His compassion was always greater than His physical weakness. A missionary from Palestine once said that Christ must have walked thirteen miles out of His way in order to meet the woman in Samaria, and started at one o'clock in the morning.

What an insight into the heart of Christ we get when we see how He felt over Jerusalem, when it would not receive Him and His teachings. The disciples had been chanting His praise because of the wonderful works they had seen, but that could not satisfy Him. His heart was breaking over the lost, and yet He was compelled in justice to utter their doom. He did it in tears, as He exclaimed: "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace!" It was the same city that had wrung from Him that agonizing cry: "O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

"But," some one may say, "O, yes, I know God cares for my soul, but what about my body. Must I meet the little sorrows and cares of life without His tender compassion? Does He care about physical needs as well as spiritual?" Yes, see how He treated the multitude when they had been three days without food, because they hung upon His gracious words, and would not go from Him. How different from the disciples. They would have sent them away hungry, but Jesus knew they came from afar, and He was moved with compassion, lest the women and little children should faint by the way. (Mar. 8: 13). When the woman came to Christ, pleading for her sick child, the disciples were disturbed, their dignity hurt, when she cried after them, but Jesus stopped and granted her request. The disciples rebuked the blind man for calling, but Jesus called them to Him, and restored their sight. When the mothers pressed their way to Jesus, to bring Him their little ones to bless, the disciples rebuked them, but Jesus said: "Forbid them not," and it is the only passage in which it is said that Jesus was displeased.

We would have thought it wonderfully kind if in that great multitude, He had only taught them, and healed the sick, for there must have been many ill in that large crowd of 4,000 persons, who went to Him, having heard of His fame. O, to realize that He is just the same to-day, just as tender, just as real and just as pleasant! We may never have felt the pangs of hunger, but all have felt soul hunger, a great consciousness of weakness, an intense longing to have more of Him. Take the Bread of Life, Jesus Himself, and feed upon Him. Is there not one who reads this, who says "Deep down, I feel a hunger to know Him," or another, who says: "The pangs of bodily hunger are as nothing to the yearning in my soul to know Him in His fullness." To both, He says: "Eat, O friend, drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved." (Song 5: 1). But there must be a definite act of appreciation of His promise by faith ere the soul can be satisfied.