

forth His glory," for at the back of every miracle which Christ ever wrought, or, perhaps, not so much at the back of every miracle as in its very heart there was a distinct definite purpose. Without that purpose the miracle would simply have been a display of power for power's sake, it would have been the marvellous play of the magician, but not the purposeful and practical action of the great Captain of our salvation !

Therefore I wish to make two remarks at once, before proceeding any further ; remarks which may clear the way for our line of thought this evening,—and first this :—Will you think how tragic must have been the significance of this scene in the wilderness to the two principal actors in it ? It was no new temptation with which the tempter plied our Lord Jesus Christ. To himself I think it must have been full of a terrible retrospective significance. Was this temptation not familiar to him not only as he had plied others with it, but as once it had plied himself. We know not but that with this very temptation he had himself been tried, and under the force and pressure of this very temptation he had himself fallen to doubt God ; to question the supreme majesty of God's claims and of God's authority, to think for a moment that it was better to have rule over the meaner creatures of God's hand than to serve God himself. Oh, I say, what strange and tragic memories may have been awakened in the breast of him who sooner than serve in heaven would away in hell ? And as it was a temptation which very likely had moved in the heart of Satan, so certainly it was the earliest temptation with which he drew near to Eve, in the day-dawn of our human history. You will remember that in words which recall the words which he uses on this occasion he spoke to her "Yea," he says, "Yea ! hath God said ?" insinuating the doubt, as the doubt so often has been insinuated since, in the form of a question, "Hath God said ?" We know that the Lord Jesus Christ was familiar with that dark chapter in human history. He recognized that here history in some strange and significant way was repeating itself, and perhaps it was for this amongst other reasons that when he was preparing to meet the tempter he did so with no other weapon than the simple sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. You will remember the scene in the first instance, how Eve looked and deliberated, and was lost. Our Lord looked not for a moment at the stones of the wilderness, our Lord thought not for a moment of Himself, but just lifted the weapon that has so often proved itself omnipotent since He charged home with the sword of the Spirit, the word of God—"It is written."

The second thought to which I would call your attention at once is the position which our Lord assumed in this instance. You will recall the word with which the devil approached him, "If thou be the Son of God," apparently desiring to measure swords with him on the question of his Divine nature. But our Lord came not into this world that he might dispute with the tempter on that point ; long ages before we may believe that our battle had been carried through and the victory had been won. Christ was in this world not for Himself, but for us. He had emptied Himself of His glory, and He had taken upon Himself the form of a servant. It behooved Him, to be in in all points like unto His brethren, tempted in all respects, like as we are, yet without sin. And therefore instead of listening to the insinuation of the tempter, instead for a single moment of entertaining the challenge that He should prove His divine nature, He took His stand at once upon the nature that was human. "If thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Here, then, as in many other passages in his earthly life, Jesus was our model. We are not the mere passive spectators, as in the old mythologies, of a battle between supernatural beings whose weapons clash in thunderous heights far above us. It is the earth upon which you and I daily tread, on which this fray was fought out, and