

(1) As a teacher Jesus was in some respects *alone*. He came into the world to teach men as well as to do and suffer the will of the Father. He came to give them true ideas of the character, nature and designs of God. From the hour that sin entered the world, and man was driven from the face of God, the earnest cry which had gone up to Heaven from the weary and heavy-burdened hearts, and the sinful souls of men, and which had increased in volume with the increase of man, was, who will show us the Father? At length in the roll of years a voice replied saying, Behold my beloved Son who is the brightness of my glory and the express image of my person! As such he went forth to reveal God to men. His message and his teaching was novel to them. He touched their curiosity and aroused their astonishment and incredulity when he declared to them that "God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son that whosoever believed on Him should not perish but have everlasting life,"—that He had come to seek and save the lost—that he was to establish a Kingdom whose subjects would be blessed with plenty, happiness and sweet content—that forgiveness of sin was now offered to every one that repented and believed—that whosoever had seen Him had seen the Father in His tenderness and pity, purity and love—that the Father yearned for the return of every erring son and daughter of man—to receive a Father's welcome and a Father's blessing. To such a message we would expect that every heart would respond. As news of it spread we would expect that the whole country would rise and go to Jesus—that the shepherd would come from the hill—the merchant from his booth—the weaver from his loom—the shoemaker from his bench—the man of letters from his book—and all join in one grand procession with its face steadfastly set towards the place where Jesus dwelt. But was such the case? Did His messages meet with such a ready reception? No! For it had to contend with the ignorance and prejudices of the unlearned and the envy of the learned. And the history of the world as well as that of Jesus tells that these are strong obstacles in the way of truth's progress. Therefore we find that our Lord was misunderstood and misinterpreted. Those who followed and delighted to hear Him had crude ideas of His mission from their reading of prophecy and from current and traditional opinions, and so they misunderstood Him. When He spoke of a Kingdom they at once sought to carry him in triumph to Jerusalem and Crown Him King of the Jews. Whilst, on the other hand, the Scribes and Pharisees, when they heard Him calling Himself the Son of God and the equal of the Father, charged Him with blasphemy. Under such circumstances how could Jesus feel otherwise than lonely? His soul was big with great truths and noble ideas, and His heart yearned to lodge them

in the minds of men, yet they would not have them. As we think of this we almost hear Him, even when crowds hang on His lips on the lone mountain side or in the Temple of Jerusalem, exclaim in the bitterness of his love. "I am alone; hearing they hear not; seeing they see not."

(2) As a *benefactor* Jesus was in some respects *alone*. He went about continually doing good. No suppliant implored His aid in vain. The blind received their sight, the dumb their speech, the halt and lame and maimed were made whole, by His word or touch. Wherever He went a stream of beneficence went forth from Him carrying riches and fertility, beauty and joy, to many a home. For all this He sought only gratitude and approval, but He sought them in vain. His deeds of mercy and acts of charity were blown upon by the breath of ingratitude, calumny and jealousy. His noblest deeds were attributed to the foulest, basest and meanest motives. Did He cast forth devils—drive forth evil spirits from the soul intended to be the temple of the Most High? He was said to do so through the Prince of the Devils.* He moved about like one among a people whose language was unknown to Him. No wonder though His heart was bruised and His spirit broken beneath the ponderous pressure of a sense of isolation.

II. But though He was denied human friendship, yet He enjoyed the unfailing love and close companionship of the Father. In all the phases of His life and work to which we have referred the Father was with Him. In the great work of our redemption which separated Him so much from the sympathy of men He enjoyed the countenance of the Father. We follow Him into Gethsemane and we hear His voice breaking the midnight stillness in prayer to the Father: "O My Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Go to Calvary and you will see that all those surrounding His cross are unsympathising foes. Every look and word and movement of that vast crowd evince neither pity nor fellow-feeling with the august sufferer whose precious blood is crimsoning the rock. Truly Jesus is left alone. Harken! His lips move. He speaks as to a friend: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

In like manner we find the Father to be with Jesus in His character and work as a teacher or philanthropist. Who forms the theme of His most touching and eloquent discourses? It is the Father. He delights to speak of Him—of His greatness and goodness, love and kindness. And so, too, we find in His acts of Mercy the Father's near him. His noblest works of wisdom, power and goodness He declares to be the fruits of his obedience to the will of the Father. Continually doing good we invariably find Him invoking the presence and coun-