

COMPANIONSHIP.

(*John xi. 35.*)

We thank Thee, Lord, for weary days
When desert-springs were dry,
And first we knew what depth of need
Thy love could satisfy.

Days when beneath the desert-sun,
Along the toilsome road,
O'er roughest ways we walked with One,
That One the Son of God.

We thank Thee for that rest in Him
The weary only know—
The perfect wondrous sympathy
We needs must learn below :

The sweet companionship of One
Who once the desert trod :
The glorious fellowship with One
Upon the throne of God ;

The joy no desolations here
Can reach, or cloud, or dim—
The present Lord, the living God,
And we *alone* with Him.

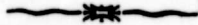
We know Him as we could not know
Through heaven's golden years ;
We there shall see His glorious face,
But Mary saw His tears.

The touch that heals the broken heart
Is never felt above ;
His angels know His blessedness,
His way-worn saints His love.

When in the glory and the rest
 We joyfully adore,
 Remembering the desert-way,
 We yet shall praise Him more.

Remembering how, amidst our toil,
 Our conflict, and our sin,
 He brought the water for our thirst
 It cost His blood to win.

And now in perfect peace we go
 Along the path He trod,
 Still learning from all need below
 Depths of the heart of God !



JESUS TEMPTED OF THE DEVIL.

(*Luke iv. 1-15.*)

In chapter iii., we see Jesus taking His place of servant with the excellent in Israel, and thereon the heavens opening and Himself owned by the Father as His beloved Son. His delights were with the sons of men, and He is traced up, not to Abraham only, the root and depositary of Jewish promises (as in Matthew), but to Adam and God Himself. Independently of His proper divine glory as Son of the Father, Jesus should be called the Son of the Highest, the Son of God. As man on earth, He was sealed with the Holy Ghost. He took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. His entire perfectness now was to fulfil, as a servant, the will of Him who sent Him ; for a servant doing his own will is a bad

servant. Dependence, waiting, and obedience, were the characteristics of this place, and they are found in Him to the uttermost. Hence, as in the Psalms, "I waited patiently for the Lord." He would not *ask* for power, but waits on God. "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" Put thoroughly to the test, He would do nothing but His Father's will. He was to learn obedience. Having taken the place, He would go through it wholly, not in one act, but experiencing the force of that expression, *learning* obedience, without one comfort here, with enemies around, bulls of Bashan besetting, dogs compassing. He had to learn obedience where obedience was always suffering, even to the yielding up of life. Every single step was humiliation till the close came in the cross, where the wrath of God was borne in love to us. No doubt He found, in His rejection, fields white for harvest, and so shall we, in our measure, when walking in the same path. But the cross was always before Him—everything that could stop a man. Nevertheless, He went on, patiently waiting, and not asking for deliverances. Thus He presented God perfectly to man, and perfect man to God.

In chapter iv., He begins this walk of suffering obedience publicly. And the first thing to be remarked is, that (ver. 1) being full of the Holy Ghost, He is led *by Him* into the wilderness, where He is tempted by the devil. There are two

ways in which the enemy has power : first, by allurements ; and secondly, by terror. In the one, he works upon us through our lusts, presenting what is calculated to attract, and so he rules over us naturally. In the other, he has the power of death. Thus, Judas being a covetous man and without the faith that purifies the heart, Satan suggested the occasion and gets him. He has no right to rule over men, but he acquires dominion through the lusts of the flesh. Another way is through the terror of death. In both he assailed the Lord, but found nothing in Him.

Here, then, we have the devil meeting *man* in the power of the Spirit of God—man tempted, not in paradise, but in the wilderness. Jesus does not say, “I am God, and you are Satan ; go away.” That would not have glorified God, nor have helped us. But as the Lord was led into the wilderness, not by lust (God forbid the thought !), but by the Holy Ghost, so in His blessed grace He puts Himself in the place where man was. He has help from none. There was all that might have stumbled rather, had it been possible : through all He goes *as man*. He must be tempted, and must overcome where man not only had failed, but was lying under the power of wickedness.

Vs. 2, 3. There was no harm in hunger ; it was no sin. He could have commanded stones to be made bread ; but to do so, save at His Father’s word, would have been doing His own will, and

then He had not been the perfect man. Satan tries to introduce into His heart a desire which was not in the word of God. He succeeded in insinuating a lust into the heart of Adam ; he fails with Jesus, though He was forty days exposed to his presence and power. Jesus had to know by experience what it was to have working at Him, without a single support, without a friend, in solitary dreariness (save indeed the wild beasts) with the devil ! Thus He measured the power of Satan. The strong man was there, putting forth all his weapons, but the stronger than he overcame : Jesus binds the strong man. He was abstracted from human condition for forty days, not like Moses to be only with God, but as the one who was always with God, to be exposed to Satan. None other man needs to be abstracted in order to be tempted, he has only to go on along with men. In this case, this extraordinary separation was to be with the devil. To be with God He did not need anything out of His every-day path, for it was His natural place ; but to be with Satan, He needed it. Others are strangers to God, and at home with Satan. He, in the most adverse things, is a stranger to Satan, and dwells in the bosom of the Father. But He emptied Himself as God to become a servant as man, and there He waits in dependence on the word of Him whom He served. The living Father had sent Him, and He lived by the Father. He was as man under His authority, and His meat was to do His will.

“By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.”

Ver. 4. It is the written word He ever uses, and Satan is powerless. What amazing importance Jesus gives the Scriptures! God now acts by the word, and Satan is resisted morally in this way. A man cannot be touched by Satan while the word is simply used in obedience. “He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one *toucheth* him not.” It was not as an exercise of divine authority He dismissed Satan, but the enemy is proved unable to grapple with obedience to the word of God. If he cannot take out of the path of obedience, he has no power. What more simple? Every child of God has the Holy Ghost *acting by the word* to keep him.

Jesus does not reason with Satan. A single text silences when used in the power of the Spirit. The whole secret of strength in conflict is using the word of God in the right way. One may say, I am not like this perfect Man: it might be so with Christ, but how can I expect the same result? True, we are ignorant, and the flesh is in us, but God is always behind, and He is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted *above* that we are able. Temptation may be simply a trial of our obedience, as in Abraham’s case, not a snare to lead us astray. Satan presents what has no appearance of evil. The evil would be—doing one’s own will. Now it solves every difficulty to ask—not, *what harm* is there in doing this or that, but—*why* am I

doing it? Is it for God or myself? What, am I to be always under this restraint? Ah! there the secret of our nature comes out: we do not like the restraint of doing what *God* will approve. It is *restraint* to do God's will! We want to do our own will. To act merely because one *must*, is law, and not the guidance of the Spirit. The word of God was the *motive* of Christ and such is Christ's guidance. Not fencing the old man, but the new man living on the word is our defence against Satan.

Vs. 3-13. The first temptation is an appeal to the need of the body. The second in Luke (not in Matthew) is the inducement of the world's glory. The third in our gospel is the religious temptation through the word of God, and therefore morally the hardest of all to one who values that word. And this is the reason why Luke departs from the actual order of the events, in order to group them morally, as is the habit of this evangelist elsewhere also. Thus we have the tempter assailing the Lord Jesus, first, as to man's *life*; second, as to the *power* given to man; and third, as to the *promises* made to Christ Himself.

The Lord might have argued with the devil, but He does not even tell him that the dominion of the world would be His by and by. He takes His stand on that which settles everything, and is a perfect example for us. He stands to God's word, and God's worship. He awaits *His* word, He worships *Him*, He serves Him *only*. How

simple and how blessed! It was the immediate link of an obedient heart with God. The question was one of relationship to God. So of old, Eliezer receives blessing, but before he begins to enjoy it, he gives thanks. He had the word first, then the blessing—and what follows forthwith? He bows his head and worships. God is the first thought of his heart (Gen. xxiv.) And so still more fully with the Lord here. The last and subtlest temptation was grounded on the promises to Messiah (9-11). If thou art the Son of God, why not try? But why should He try, who KNEW that God was for Him? Why should He be like presumptuous Israel of old, who would go up the hill in disobedience, to prove whether the Lord was among them. Not even when Lazarus was sick would He stir, till it was the Father's will, though all nature would have moved; and He knew well the sorrow of that house which was His refuge; for "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus."

The Lord did not listen. Who would? you say. But you do listen to Satan, every day of your lives, that you seek a very little bit of the world. But was there not a promise? Doubtless there was; yet *why* should He throw Himself down to see whether God would be as good as His word? Did He not know that God was with Him? And so with us; let us only have the word *behind* us, no matter what may be before us. Never should we raise a question whether God is with us. If He does not send, let us not move, but let us never

question His presence. If we are in the simple path of His will, the Holy Ghost will act *in* us to guide, and not merely *on* us to correct.

Thus then, in the order of Luke, which, as we have seen, is not historical, but moral, we have the progressive exercises of a man. First, natural lusts ; secondly, worldly lusts ;* and lastly, spiritual temptations. The Lord Jesus was tempted *here*, not in Eden, but in the great system where we are. He put Himself, by the will and wisdom of God, in the place of our difficulty in the world, where man is. He has gone through all the difficulties a saint is in. Who wants His help? Not a sinner, for he wants salvation ; but a saint needs help and sympathy in his path. We have practically to keep our first estate, as renewed. Satan cannot touch the new man, but he tries to entice him out of the path of godliness. We want succour to walk as obedient ones where Christ walked.

V. 14, 15. " And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit, into Galilee. . . . And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.' In all things His obedience is shown. Untouched by Satan, He goes forth in unhindered power ; as we shall in a measure, if like Him we pass through temptation, so as not to be touched by Satan.

* Satan's saying in Luke iv. 6 (" All this power, &c.) was false as to *right*, but true in *fact*, through men's lusts. So far as these go, he gives the power ; but God, after all, is above him, and governs in providence.

THE DEATH OF LAZARUS.

(*John xi.*)

"Sorrow is a sacred thing," it has been justly and beautifully said. But it is a fruitful thing also. If a sorrowing house be a sanctuary, so that no rude foot should trespass, it is also a spot for divine husbandry, and ready to yield its good and profitable fruit.

The sickness and death of Lazarus procured for the loved family at Bethany a visit from the Lord, a circumstance in itself full of blessing and of promise; and in that visit we see several things which may well engage, not only our attention, but, our hearts.

He sympathizes with the sorrow, and then removes the cause of it. He "wept" first, and afterwards said, "Lazarus, come forth."

The purpose which He carried with Him of removing the occasion of the misery, left His heart still the seat of present compassion with it. It was so in the case of sending out the apostles. He was about to give them pastors according to His own heart; but looking on them as sheep that had no shepherd, He had compassion on the multitudes (Matt. ix. 36—x. 5). It was so again in His feeding the people. He was about to give them bread enough and to spare, but, on seeing them, He had compassion (Matt. xv. 32-38).

No prospect of the future, be it as bright and

certain as it may, can rightly close the heart to the claims of the present. The follower of Christ will "weep" as he enters the house of mourning or the chamber of death, though he knows that the power of resurrection, in season, will clothe the scene in all its own magnificence and joy.

With this sympathy and this power over the cause of the sorrow, we see, moreover, the instructions of wisdom and the lessons of God enjoyed through His sorrow.

Martha speaks of her grief to the Lord, and much ignorance is expressed through the natural, and in some sense pardonable, exercises of her wounded heart. But Jesus teaches her the way of God more perfectly. He lets the light of some wondrous truths break in upon her soul, truths deeper and more precious than what the hours of her undisturbed ease and happiness had been able to discover. The light of the day of prosperity had not shown her what Jesus now brought with Him in this night of weeping. She is made to see some bright shinnings of the glory of God through the tears of that sorrow, through that gloom of death which had entered her dwelling. "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." The place was indeed a sanctuary, and Jesus Himself treads softly. He wept. He owned the claim of such a moment. But it was a spot for Him to cultivate also. It was a garden of the Lord's; and He enriches it with fresh fruit and growth of

knowledge. Again, let me say of this affecting scene, that it is made productive to others also. Many believe, when they witness how the grace and power of the Lord had dealt with this sorrow. "Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on Him."

I ask, is not all this as much the history of this our day, as it was of the day of Martha and Mary? Who need live long and travel far to know that the sorrows of the saints still draw the willing visits of Christ; and that, during such visits, He sympathizes and teaches? Who, I ask, need live long and travel far to know this? Gracious it is in the Spirit, and gracious to us, to have the record of such things in the book "written for our learning." But is it less gracious in Him, or less gracious to us, that these things are not merely the things of history, but the common things of experience and observation?

And further. This sorrow is the occasion of fresh acts of supplication and of worship. "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me," said the Lord. And is this at all more strange or less a matter of experience than the others? What say our own souls?

" Trials make the promise sweet,
 Trials give new life to prayer;
 Trials bring me to His feet,
 Lay me low and keep me there."

This is not history, but experience. It is not

the light of other days which, as we hear, was wont to cheer the night of weeping or the house of mourning, but the light which, as we know, is still wont to hold its court and display its power in the dark valley and in the shadow of death!

I am bold also to add another thought—a thought, too, lately made very precious to my own heart—that the blessed Lord, in unjealous love, allows both our sorrows and our mercies to be fresh links between Himself and our poor fond hearts. The widow of Sarepta was afresh bound to the prophet, when she received her son from the dead. Her joy, in one she so loved being restored to her, acted as another link of tenderest and yet strongest texture between her heart and the man of God, the witness of Christ; and the Spirit allowed it, I am sure (1 Kings xvii. 24). So in much later days, the Lord allowed His servant to be thankful and take courage on seeing brethren again, after a long separation, though during that separation he had enjoyed His presence and encouragements in a sweet and large measure (Acts xxviii.) And so here. Receiving their brother from the dead, the dear family at Bethany are more than ever the Lord's. In the power and joy of resurrection they sit with Him (Chap. xii. 1, 2). They delight in Him afresh through the mercy which their common natural human feelings had received.



“He does not *send* the rod, but *brings* it.”

THE HAND OF GOD UPON HIS OWN.

How little there is amongst the dear people of God, the bowing in heart, to that word in 1 Peter v. 6-7: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time; Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you."

In how many ways does God, in the exercise of His government amongst His own, put His hand upon us in sickness, in infirmities, or it may be by bringing us into tight places; but how slow are our hearts to lose sight of second causes, and to own Him in all that betides us. And wherefore this slowness? Is it because we cannot *trust* Him? It is not the hand of a judge smiting me that brings me down, for note the sweet connection: if I own that mighty hand of God upon me, I own also the effect of it is not to drive me from Him, but rather to draw me closer to Him, so close that with the consciousness of His hand upon me I can cast all my care upon Him and rest in the everlasting arms of the One who assures me, "He careth for you." What a sweet lesson to learn that the hand that brings me low, at one and the same moment, draws me near!

Hearken to the remnant cry again: "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

The following heart-stirring words are ascribed to the French Huguenots in the days of their bitter persecution :—" If perish we must under Thy justice, we shall perish adoring Thee. Thy wrath, would it extinguish us? Then we shall flee to Thy heart. Is extermination Thy design for us? We shall make that new cause to fear Thee. In spite of life, in spite of death, we shall bless the stroke Thy hand applies. They are the blows of a tempest, but they bring us into port."

Surely but a verification of the concluding verses of Romans viii.: " For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."



DO WE TRACE THINGS ONLY TO THE HAND OF GOD AND GO NO FURTHER?

I trust I may never forget one lesson I learnt of God some years ago ; and, as He who takes to Himself (and O how rightly !) the title of " The Father of mercies and the God of all comfort," comforteth those that be in tribulation, not only that they may be comforted themselves, but that they may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith they themselves have been comforted of God, I will just jot it down hoping that it may be used to help and comfort

others. Many years ago, and not long before being called to pass through a very heavy trial and sorrow, I went up to London (England). Whilst there I went one evening to where I knew a Bible reading was to be, During the meeting the old brother in whose house the meeting was held, made the following remark (I forget now what the connection was): " We often speak of tracing things up to the Lord's *hand*, but do we give His *heart* credit for moving His hand." I was much struck by the remark at the time (little knowing what was before me) and my mind reverted to it occasionally, and I saw that the *hand* was but the servant of the *heart*, even in ordinary things. For instance, if a thief steals anything, the heart has first coveted it, and the hand is merely the agent that appropriates what the heart longs for. Well, I returned to my home and about six weeks after, one very very dear to me was taken rather suddenly. In my sorrow (and deep it was) the above mentioned remark came before me. Others spoke about so and so having been the means of bringing the infection, etc. But to me (and I thank God for the grace given) there were no second causes to be looked at. No, to God Himself I must trace it, and not to His hand only but to His heart. What, His heart? Yes, *the same heart that gave Jesus*. Oh, the exquisite sweetness and infinite preciousness of the thought were inexpressible! And I knew what it was to have God Himself wiping away the tears from my eyes.

Another incident comes before me which I will mention as being in every way in keeping with what has gone before. A young sister in the Lord had just lost her babe, her first-born, and was, as might be supposed, in deep grief. An old brother who knew her well wrote to her. In the letter was the following (as nearly as I can call to mind): "May you know the joy of having Jesus wipe away the tears from your eyes, and know that it is more blessed to have Him wipe away your tears than to have no tears to wipe away."

In conclusion I would add that I have found in my own experience the truth of what I once heard another say, viz.: "There is no bitterness, even in the deepest sorrow, unless the will is at work. It is the working of the will that brings the bitterness."

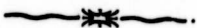
DEUTERONOMY VIII. 3.

No one is led into the place of weeping without getting *some* joy. Israel were already God's people: He leads them into the wilderness to humble them; He makes them hunger that He may give them manna; He leads them into trial that He may give them something better. Some would say, If in the midst of the leeks, onions, and flesh-pots of Egypt God had given them the manna, they would have rejected all other things because the manna was better; but it is not so. While the flesh is surrounded by that which suits it, it is fed thereby, and will reject the better things. Day

by day, hour by hour, God is leading us to that condition of hunger that He may give us something better, something not discernible by the natural mind, but satisfying. When I have tasted the manna, there is a *reality* about it ; it is not faith any longer. If I am hungry in the wilderness and am fed and braced up by the food; do I not know it? Can power come into my veins; and I not know it? It might be a matter of faith that we are to have the manna to-morrow ; but it was a matter of feeling and reality that they had eaten it to-day. As we eat and are strengthened, let us say, I *know* that man doth not live by bread alone. We feed on Jesus the living bread, the gift of the Father, and we may say that we are miraculously fed from heaven every day by supernatural food, that we might know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

What think you of possessing in *measure now* all that we shall possess in the day of the Lord? Then pain of body and pain of heart would all appear very light, and we could say with the Apostle, after enumerating things that would make some people mad (read 2 Cor. xi. 23-33), " these *light afflictions*, which are but for a moment." Why do not we thus speak? It is the right of all who have the Spirit. Outside the sanctuary, until the Lord comes, there will be troubled hearts and diseased souls, but it must not surprise us ; it is all alike an opportunity for the display of God's grace

which spreads itself abroad to meet the misery. Every want that pressed on the Lord Jesus always gave an occasion in His soul to the cry of faith.



LAST INTERVIEW WITH A SERVANT OF CHRIST, BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE TO BE WITH THE LORD.

Sadly altered was the poor worn-out body, pillowed in an easy chair, but his spirit rejoicing in his much-loved Lord. He said, "Two months ago, when I felt this sickness was unto death, I asked Him to reveal Himself to me in increased loveliness and nearness.—*He did, He filled me with Himself—I know the blood has done its blessed, blessed work for my soul ; it is His love, His beauty, His perfection, that fill my heart and vision.*" He then spoke of feeling a little better that day ; "But, ah ! that is no pleasure to me." Then, clasping his dear, thin hands together, he said, while tears flowed down his face, "My precious Lord Jesus, *Thou knowest* how fully I can say with Paul, to depart and be with Thee is far better ! Oh how far better ! I do long for it ! They come and talk to me of a crown of glory—I bid them cease ; of the glory of heaven—I bid them stop. I am not wanting crowns.—I have HIMSELF ! HIMSELF. I am going to be with HIMSELF : Ah ! with the Man of Sychar ; with Him who stayed to call Zaccheus ; with the Man of the viiiith of John ; with the Man who hung upon the cross ; with the Man who died ;

Oh ! to be with Him before the glories, the crowns or the kingdom appear ! It's wonderful—wonderful !—with the Man of Sychar alone ; the Man of the gate of the city of Nain ! and I am going to be with Him forever ! exchange this sad, sad scene, which cast Him out, for His presence. Oh ! the Man of Sychar ! ”



FRAGMENT.—The Christianity of the closet, and the Christianity of busy life, are not, as is often fancied, conflicting things. The man who has fellowship with Jesus in his solitude knows how to carry the savour of the fellowship even into the most common affairs. There is need of prayer in this matter. For though we be convinced that there is but one thing needful, we are easily led away, like Martha, to busy and trouble ourselves about “many things.” Many things we must needs do and care about, while we are in the body ; but the work to which Christ calls us is to do and care about these things in such a spirit as to make them part and parcel of our great work—the work of keeping close to Jesus, and of following Him whithersoever He goeth. If only willing to leave all and follow Christ, He would make the cross not heavy to be borne, but a delight, more pleasant than to the miser is his load of gold, or to the earthly monarch are his insignia of power. “*My* yoke is easy, and *my* burden is light.”