

THE POWER AND GLORY OF GOD

BY DR. THOMAS'S DAUGHTER.

Faith, hope, and patience, are called to pass through many a testing crucible. But they grow brighter through the trial. Those who have the faith and “hope set before us in the gospel,” are enabled to grasp steadfastly those things which will prove the only sure foundation for the mind to rest upon, being able to prove from the testimony, that we have this faith and hope, will leads us to the consolations that are offered us through Christ Jesus. And the words of comfort contained in “the word of truth,” seem to come laden with most precious, invigorating influences to the wearied spirit of the believer. Thus we may receive strength to endure.

The strength that is gained through suffering, affliction, and trial, when the mind is able to feed upon the word of God, tends greatly to the upbuilding of the inner, spiritual life. One of the benefits to be derived, doubtless, from suffering and affliction, in this mortal state, is the scope it affords for the development of faith, hope, and patience.

Many are the bright examples handed down to us in the Scriptures of the most worthy characters who passed through the most severe afflictions, and whose faith and patience are noted in the Spirit's record. One of the most noted is the patriarch Job. He is brought forward by the apostle, as an example of suffering and of patience, and also as illustrating the tender mercy of the Lord. Not only do we read how deeply he was afflicted. We learn at the same time how steadfast and firm were his faith and hope in God. Being conscious of having scrupulously endeavoured to live up to every moral requirement, the severe affliction which came upon him served to prove him. The proof which it subjected him to caused that faith and hope and patience to shine with brightest lustre, even as the gold that is tested in the fiery furnace is made to shine in all the brilliancy which it is susceptible of. It served to exalt his appreciation of Jehovah, and to lessen any appreciation of himself. Through faith he was able to grow in “the knowledge of God,” and to discern the object which his trial was intended to work out. The reasoning of his own mind, concerning the purpose of God with himself, is, in a certain place, expressed thus: “Will he plead against me with his great power?”—then, in the fulness of child-like confidence, he said, “No: but he would put strength in me” (ch. 23). Thus recognising that the great trial which had come upon him would ultimate in the purifying and strengthening of his spiritual life.

The kind of strength here referred to, is a moral and spiritual strength, not a physical power. It is the kind of strength spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, when he saith: “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength” (Isa. 40:31).

And that spoken of by Solomon, as he saith, “The way of the Lord is strength to the upright” (Prov. 10:29). The spirit of wisdom, speaking through the wise man, saith, “I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, &c. . . . Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding: I have strength” (Prov. 8:12–14).

Apart from the “way of the Lord,” human nature is said to be “without strength.” The apostle Paul thus speaks of it: “For when we were yet without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly,” (Rom. 5:6). Christ hath said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). It is clearly obvious then, that there is no spiritual life apart from Christ: there is no way of approach unto the Father, apart from him: and without him, “the truth,” would not have been made manifest for salvation. Through him therefore, the “way of the Lord” is opened up to all those who obey his call to walk therein. It is in this way that we obtain that strength and power, which will enable us to attain unto the life of the age, “Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1:24). Thus the beautiful significance of the words of Paul, is opened up, when he saith: “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom. 1:18). The gospel, is that which gives strength and power: because it reveals Christ unto us. It tells about Christ, in all the varied relations, in which his mission is portrayed.

In certain passages, the gospel is styled “the gospel of the Kingdom of God.” “The things concerning the kingdom of God” form a large portion of “the truth,” which is the power of God for salvation. Another testimony tells us that “the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness: but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:18). The true teaching concerning the cross, or the crucifixion of Jesus, is then a part of “the power of God for salvation.”

Paul also tells us he desired to “know him and the power of his resurrection” (Phil. 3:10). The truth concerning his resurrection is as essential a part of the power of God, as the truth concerning his crucifixion. His “wisdom” and his “righteousness” are a part of the same saving power of the Deity. “For,” saith the apostle Paul, “of him are ye in Christ Jesus; who of God is made unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30).

Christ, being made unto us, these wonderful and essential elements—the truth concerning these attributes must be a part of the power of God for salvation. Thus, we are led up to the Father himself: who is the great source and fountain of all things pertaining to life and godliness.

“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6). “But,” saith Paul, “we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”

The “treasure” here spoken of, graciously committed to “earthen vessels”—is “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God;” and the “excellency” of this “power is of God, and not of us.” Does the truth concerning this heavenly treasure form any part of the gospel of Christ? The words of Paul furnish a potent testimony upon this point. He evidently regards the subject of his discourse in that place as a part of his gospel. For he said concerning some who believed not: “In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believed not; lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” “The gospel of the glory of Christ,” is an expression which may be understood in a twofold sense, viz.:—that the gospel is very

largely concerning “the glory of Christ;” and that it has emanated from the Father’s spirit of glory that dwelt in Christ.

The elements that go to make up this glory are manifold. But we must ever keep in view that “the excellency of the power is of God.” We are thus led to the testimony of Paul again, where he saith “All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation: to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them: and hath committed unto us the Word of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:18, 19). The significance of this is more fully unfolded in the words of Christ, that tell how the works that he did, and the words that he spake, were the Father’s words and the Father’s works. He saith, “My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me” (John 7:16). “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” . . . “Verily I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do, for what things whatsoever He doeth these also doeth the Son like wise” (John 5:17–19). “The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works. Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works’ sake” (John 14:10, 11).

The Father has wrought out a mighty work for the salvation of all who come unto him through Jesus Christ. And Christ has wrought out, or manifested the Father’s mighty work; the Father’s wisdom, the Father’s righteousness, the Father’s sanctification and plan of redemption. It is therefore essential for all who seek for eternal life, to believe, and accept of his plan; and to place themselves in harmonious relation to all that has been revealed for our benefit, in obedience to the word of Christ, that he said to them that inquired of him, “What shall we do that we may work the works of God?” Jesus answered and said unto them, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom He hath sent” (John 6:28, 29).

The apostle Paul, therefore, tells us that “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” Faith lays hold of the Word, the wisdom, the righteousness, the sanctification;—the whole work of redemption manifested through Christ. It is only through faith that we can become related to the Christ; that we can become sons and daughters of Jehovah, and the true seed of Abraham; and brethren and sisters of the anointed. Only through faith can we become partakers of the glorious things that He “is made unto us.” That manifestation of the “light of the knowledge of the glory of God,” that shone out through Jesus Christ, will also shine into our hearts, if we have got faith to receive it.

Certain words of the apostle are descriptive of the state of true believers, when he saith:—“By whom, also, we have access by faith, into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:2). “The glory of God,” then we learn, forms a part of the “hope set before us in the gospel.” It is a part of the power of God for salvation. It is revealed first, as His moral and spiritual power, through the gospel of Christ; and to be revealed in the future age, in corporeal, substantial, spirit forms, of immortal power, strength, and beauty.

So that “the gospel of the glory of Christ” calls us, through faith, into relation to the moral power of Deity first, in the present life:—and in the future, into relation to his

substantial spirit power, in its manifestation through the spirit body. Upon both these manifestations of power and glory, all our hopes depend. The apostle alludes to both in the following testimony: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead: *To* an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith, unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1.). . . . “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen ye love: in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Pet. 1:7, 8).

One important element in the power which is given us through the Gospel, is the sufferings which we have to endure for Christ’s sake. This was evidently recognised by the patriarch Job, when reasoning within himself, as to the object of the great afflictions which had been permitted to come upon him. The words of faith and hope, he said: “He would put strength in me.” The “Trial of his faith” was found to be “precious”; and will undoubtedly be “found unto praise and honour and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” Let us, therefore, cherish the injunction of the apostle, when he saith: “Walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory” (1 Thess. 2:12).