

January 22.

"When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. And, behold, there came a leper, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed."—Matt. viii. 1-3.

This chapter of healings follows immediately after the chapters of teaching,—the Sermon on the Mount; and it is not without deep significance for us, that we find our Lord engaged in one miracle of cure after another, as soon as He came down from the mountain. For as we read the holy and divine precepts He uttered, we stand convicted before Him; we say, "who is sufficient for these things?" Thy law is holy, and just, and good, but we are guilty before Thee,—"*unclean, unclean.*" Then let us go to Him like the leper; He is still the healer, as well as the teacher, the *way*, as well the *truth* and the life. The leper's example is full of instruction and encouragement; he *worshipped*, he owned His Divine power, he called Him Lord, he said, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean;" and the one doubt on his mind, the doubt as to His willingness, Jesus answered for ever, for him and for us, "*I will*, be thou clean."

"Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched,  
Weak and wounded, sick and sore,  
Jesus ready stands to save you,  
Full of mercy, join'd with power.  
He is able, He is willing—doubt no more."

January 23.

"Because the Lord hath loved his people, he hath made thee king over them."—2 Chron. ii. 11.

These were the words of Hiram, king of Tyre, to Solomon; but with how much greater force may we apply them to Him of whom the royal Solomon was a type? Truly, "in this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through him;" and the love shines the brighter when we consider the price paid by our King for His people's ransom, even His own precious blood. We take a low view of the love of God if we consider it as having been purchased for us by Christ's death; rather should we say, His death was the highest proof of God's love; for "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son." But it is vain to try to separate the love of the blessed and glorious Trinity in this great work of redemption. "*God is love,*" as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; may He give us to know His love! May we submit ourselves entirely to our heavenly King! then the more we see of His wisdom and beauty, the more shall we feel that God hath loved His people in making Him King over them.

"Immortal honours, endless fame,  
Attend the almighty Father's name;  
The Saviour-Son be glorified.  
Who for lost man's redemption died;  
And equal adoration be,  
Eternal Comforter, to Thee!"

## January 24.

"And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."—Isa. lviii. 11.

With such promises before us, why do we ever suffer our souls to remain "as a dry and thirsty land where no water is?" The fault is in ourselves, not in our outward circumstances, nor in our Lord, who knows them and appoints them, and gives us in His Word promises like this to assure us that in Himself we may ever find the supply of our spiritual wants, whatever may be the barrenness of the outward ordinances of grace. "Rivers of living waters," is the promise of the Saviour to whosoever believeth on Him. "This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive." This blessed Spirit is ever nigh. He is waiting to "drop from above" on our hearts. He is near in the sick-room, when, perhaps, the weary sufferer's spirit is ready to faint. He can satisfy as well as guide, grant peace and convey instruction, till the soul, like a watered garden, brings forth all manner of lovely fruits of righteousness. Without Him the best teaching and the richest means of grace fail to refresh us; with Him we may find green pastures and still waters wherever we go. Let us strive to realise this, and cease to lay the blame and burden of our dulness on outward circumstances, striving to feel with David, "All my springs are in Thee."

"Thou of life the fountain art,  
Freely let me take of Thee;  
Spring Thou up within my heart,  
Rise to all eternity."

## January 25.

"And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them."—Mark x. 16.

How thankful we may be that the graphic pen of St. Mark has given us such full details of this touching scene ! It reveals to us new and lovely features in the character of our Lord; and many a little child's heart has been early drawn in love to the Saviour by the picture of His tenderness here brought before us. He blessed them ! We cannot help wishing to know what was the future history of those early blessed ones ; we may believe that it was not in vain that they were brought to Him, and that they are, even at this day, praising in heaven Him who so early " took them up," and " blessed them." We read often of blessings bestowed by our Lord on particular characters, as in the Sermon on the Mount; but except the blessing pronounced on "Simon Bar-jona," (Matt. xvi. 17,) we do not read of any individual blessings except this one; and we know nothing of those who here received it, but that they were *little children*. It is generally taken for granted that the *mothers*, or parents, at least, brought the children; but that is not mentioned here ; and I think this may and ought to encourage us to bring any children in whom we are interested—god-children, Sunday scholars, or others, to Him ; He is still the same Jesus, and will forbid none of the little ones to come to Him.

"He raised them in His holy arms,

He blessed them from the world and all its harms;

Heirs though they were of sin and shame,

He blessed them in His own, and in His Father's name."

## January 26.

"My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the King : my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Thou art fairer than the children of men."—Ps. xlv. 1, 2.

"He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."—John xvi. 14.

It is the Spirit of God who reveals Christ to His people. He is the ready writer who inspired the tongue of the Psalmist to sing, and filled his heart with things "touching the King," as he indited this "good matter;" the expression in the margin, "my heart *boileth*, or *bubbleth up*," gives the idea of an overflowing well-spring of holy praise. Without the teaching of the same Spirit, we can see in Christ "no beauty that we should desire Him;" but when He opens our eyes and our hearts, we cry, "Thou art fairer than the children of men!" "Thou art the chiefest among ten thousand !" What need have we to plead continually Christ's own promise, and entreat Him to grant us His Spirit's teaching? this alone can enable us to "see the King in His beauty," and to rejoice in Him as *our* King.

"Come, Holy Spirit, from above,

With all Thy quick'ning powers;

Come, shed abroad a Saviour's love,

And that shall kindle ours."

## January 27.

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."—Gal. v. 16.

This is the secret of a holy life and conversation, to "walk in the Spirit;" and this is what the Apostle solemnly tells us we must do, if we would be freed from living in bondage to the "lusts of the flesh." For the spiritual man, who has the Holy Spirit of God dwelling in him, cannot be at the same time fulfilling those evil works of the flesh of which we have in this passage so fearful a picture; he lives in a new atmosphere, he has a new nature given him through the grace of God in Christ Jesus, and he desires daily more and more "to die unto sin and live unto righteousness." If we are tempted to evil, (and who is not tempted?) let us remember the Apostle's words, and seek to walk in the Spirit, to maintain a closer and nearer communion with our heavenly Father through the Spirit dwelling in us, then we shall find the desires after the works of the flesh grow weaker as His grace grows stronger in us. These two, the works of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit, are contrary the one to the other. If we would maintain a close walk with God, we must avoid fulfilling the lusts of the flesh; and, on the other hand, if we would be preserved from fulfilling them, we must be careful to keep up a close walk with God in the secret of our hearts.

"Oh for a closer walk with God,

A calm and heavenly frame!

A light to shine upon the road

That leads me to the Lamb!

## January 28.

"Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp."—Ps. cl. 3.

"And I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps."—Rev. xiv. 2.

"They stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God."—Rev. xv. 2.

In the Psalms we have repeated mention of praising God with instrumental music, and we know from the historical narrative how important a place it held in the temple service. But when we read of harps in the upper sanctuary, as seen by St. John in the Revelation, it seems as if more is meant than such praise as even the sweet Psalmist of Israel could offer with his well-tuned psaltery; and I cannot but think that something higher is here symbolised. Cowper says,

"Man is a harp whose chords elude the sight,  
Each yielding harmony disposed aright."

And may it not be that something like this is what we are to understand by the "harps of God?" Hearts, in every chord attuned to harmony, must utter sounds of praise worthy of heaven. Oh, what that music must be, when there is no longer a jarring note or an imperfect, feeble tone! when all is holy harmony and unity, and the theme of their song the highest that man or angel can utter— "Worthy is the Lamb!"

"Hark! how the adoring hosts above  
With songs surround the throne,  
Ten thousand thousand are their tongues,  
But all their hearts are one.  
Worthy the Lamb that died, they cry,  
To be exalted thus!  
Worthy the Lamb, let us reply,  
For He was slain for us!"

## January 29.

"And Jesus answering, said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."—Luke v. 31, 32.

In answer to the murmurs of the Pharisees, our Lord announces this principle of His dealings with men, and blessed be God for such a declaration! He came as the Physician of the sick, as the Saviour of the lost; not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance ; and it is in the confidence that such is His will that I may venture to draw near to Him as my Physician, as my Saviour! Had He laid down any qualification of merit, I must have despaired; for the nearer I approach to Him, the more do I behold my own utter vileness, and the more plainly do I see that whoever is whole, I am sick, whoever is righteous, I am a sinner before Him in thought, word, and deed. And it is not only at the beginning of the Christian course, but all through, even to the end, that this principle holds true; we must come as sick, as sinners; we have nothing but His free grace to lay hold of ; if we have laboured for Him, our labours need to be washed and purified before they can be accepted; and if we have learned anything of His love and His goodness, we shall see to the end of our days on earth, that we have nothing in ourselves whereby we can stand as righteous in His sight.

"Not the labour of my hands,  
Can fulfil Thy law's demands.  
Could my tears for ever flow,  
Could my zeal no respite know,  
All for sin would not atone;  
Thou must save, and Thou alone."