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Associational Sermon.

For the Christian Messenger.

A GLIMPSE AT DEITY.

PREACHED BEFORE THE P. E. ISLAND BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, MONDAY THE 19TH OF JULY.

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(Concluded.)

(3.) God is described further, as "doing wonders." That Jehovah should do wonders is not wonderful. Himself incomprehensible, we do not expect that his movements will be other than mysterious. That these are so, we immediately and unquestioningly acknowledge. The mind of God, vast and eternal, knows no limit; it compasses the Infinite. Ours is narrow and confined. Hence, His conceptions dazzle and amaze us, and those things which He doth as by a motion of His hand we marvel at, and term wonders. To endeavour to catalogue all the wonders of God would be to attempt a hopeless task. This, Job seemed to acknowledge when he concluded a brief and necessarily imperfect list of them with the words, "which doeth great things past finding out, yea, and wonders without number. The use in the text of the present participle "doing" seems to imply continuity. He is a God *doing* wonders. It is characteristic of the Eternal One constantly to be engaged in that which is great and marvellous. His thoughts far exceed our thoughts; consequently, the actions to which they give birth are a constant succession of wonders. It may be well here, further, to observe, that all God's wonders, whatever their apparent character, are wise, good, and necessary. Well might we tremble lest so vast a power in some capricious moment should destroy us utterly, or suddenly overwhelm us in endless agony where it not that that Power is commissioned by limitless love and directed by unfaltering Wisdom. God is "too wise to err, too good to be unkind." Unperceived of human sense, yet everywhere present, the Eternal Self-existent One silently, but effectively operates upon all parts of His creation, and rules with irresistible power the destiny of all things. To conceive in any appreciable degree of all the wondrous acts which His single arm has accomplished in the past; of all the vast purposes He may be steadily effecting now; of all the deep and awful counsels that lie hidden in His eternal mind respecting the future, must for ever remain immeasurably beyond the loftiest created mind, whether human or angelic. The sole possessor of all, there is no spot throughout the boundless realms of space where His potent influence is not felt. Millions of worlds, with all their interests and concerns, exist dependent upon Him. What those interests and concerns may be, it is not for us to judge, though we know that the exigencies of one alone called for the death of His only begotten Son. Yet, though continually occupied with such stupendous things, the Sovereign Ruler of all knows no thought of weariness, and as He has ever been, so shall He ever continue, a God "doing wonders."

In His dealings with our world, God has repeatedly revealed Himself to man as the wonder worker. Whether we trace Him in His general providence, as regards the whole human family; or more particularly, in His policy with respect to the Church; or even if we descend to individual cases, and mark the solitary career, the same conclusion awaits us at the termination of each inquiry—truly, Thou art a God "doing wonders." Important, however, as these investigations would be in their connection with the subject under consideration, the pursuit of them would be altogether inconsistent with our present limits. An instance or two by way of illustration must suffice. Let us recur to the occasion of the text. Those manifestations of Jehovah's power in Egypt (to which it will be needless for us now to refer particular-

ly) where specially designated by Himself, "my wonders." As such, they have ever possessed a charm to the Jewish mind. Again, and again, in prophecy and psalm, are we reminded of God's wondrous works in the land of Ham. Like one determined to do his work with terrible thoroughness, the Almighty, following up each fresh advantage, poured force after force in quick succession upon the amazed Egyptians; until, with one final effort, He "shook off" His adversary, and victoriously led forth the people whose cause He had so victoriously espoused. But the glad defiant song which rent the air on that morning of victory, was but an early stanza in the great poem of wonders: till in later years, when the toil of pilgrimage had long been forgotten in the delights of their beautiful home, the sweet singers of Israel took up the unfinished lay, and continued the strain. They spoke of the smitten rock, and its gushing waters; they sang of the rain of manna when man did eat angel's food; and then told of the pillar of cloud and fire. These and many other marvellous things they record which still live to us, and which are monuments to His glory who doeth wonders.

But the end is not yet. That God out of nothing should have brought the materials to compose a world, was marvellous. As for the world itself, it is one huge exhibition of wonders which meet and confound us at every turn. God has spread the earth with a rich and varied tapestry, which, as we consider it, equally excites our astonishment as it provokes our admiration, and gratifies the sense. Man, its chief tenant, is in himself, and to himself, inexplicably mysterious. In vain he subjects himself to the closest scrutinies. At each new examination he stumbles over fresh mysteries, until he exclaims with David, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." But upon this earth, and amid this scene of marvels, there has transpired that which—the crowning wonder of all—has excited the profound astonishment of the universe; and, compared with which, the mightiest products of God's power and wisdom become tame, dull, and unattractive. Oh how shall I tell the mighty story! The Infinite God, the Adored of Angels, the King Eternal, Invisible, the great "Proprietor of the Universe," visiting this tiny fragment of His dominions in the form of man, suffered Himself to be dragged to execution by His own creatures, and submitted to a death most shameful, cruel, and ignominious. *Man took God, and nailed Him to a tree.* It was a great mystery that God should become flesh; that in that flesh He should weep, and bleed, and die, is still more marvellous; but oh! wonder of wonders!—Give ear, O heaven; and he astonished, O earth!—He died for His murderers!

"God the mighty Maker, died For man the creature's sin."

Ah, brethren, here is a wonder indeed. How should we love Him! My unsaved hearer, shall I tell thee one wonder more ere I conclude on this point? It is not God's wonder, but man's. Next to Christ dying for His enemies, there is no wonder so great as that men should despise His love, and refuse mercy so dearly brought. Act no longer so ungrateful a part. Turn thy step to Calvary, and that dying Sufferer will do wonders for thee.

Having dwelt thus far upon the first part of our text.—A glimpse of Deity—and which has necessarily occupied the greater portion of our time, we will now regard the subject in its more practical bearing, as we consider the effect of this glimpse upon the beholders.

II. THE EFFECT UPON THE BEHOLDERS.—This is seen in the language with which they refer to that remarkable revelation. It drew from the lips of the ransomed people the cry, "Who is like unto Thee, Oh Lord among the Gods? Who is like Thee?" Analyzing these words we readily notice as conspicuously evident.

(1.) *God exalted in the heart.*—

Under the depressing influence of Egypt's tyranny, the children of Israel had almost relapsed into unconsciousness of the God of their fathers, until the appearing of Moses, reviving the faded memories of the past, again directed their thoughts to Abraham's God. Each following wonder like a newly kindled star, lent fresh light to their benighted minds. They not only heard of God from the lips of Moses, but in hail and locusts and death-stroke beheld Him. Gradually before their brightening vision, the dim shadow of Jehovah's perfection grew more distant, until, in the enthusiasm of final victory, they beheld Him with undimmed eye, and their conquering leader, reached a position in their hearts unyielded before. Thus it is ever. God is greatest in their hearts who know Him best. There is in Jehovah such infinite store as the most avaricious spirit can never exhaust; and the fuller and the more intimate our acquaintance with him, the grander and the truer shall be our conception of His transcendent glory. The importance to the believer of having high and exalted ideas of God, it can scarcely be necessary for me to urge. Such feelings prove often to our too wayward spirits, a salutary check. We remember that God is near. In secret meditation we hear His footsteps, and in the busy scenes of life we witness new evidences of His power. At times, startled with a sudden realization of His presence, in hurried ejaculation we seek His favor. The presence of God awes us, the thought of His immensity overwhelms us, and with horror we recoil from the faintest suggestion of evil. Moreover, such feelings act as a powerful stimulant to duty. The greater the monarch the more dignified and momentous the service of the ambassador. "As ambassadors for God we beseech men." In proportion as the believer recognizes the greatness of his Lord, will he also perceive the honor of his position, and the meekness of a becoming diligence. But I have reserved the truest argument: *He is worthy.* Great is the Lord and therefore greatly to be praised by all true hearts. "Give to the Lord, give to the Lord the glory due unto his name." To deny to merit its meed of honor betokens either ignorance or unmanliness. Who then is he who will best exalt His Lord? He who has seen Him most; he who has gazed upon him the oftenest and the fondest; he shall lift Him highest, for God is honored with the heart in proportion as He is seen with the eye.

(2.) Another effect, and one very naturally springing from such a revelation, was—*Strong confidence in God.* Our text breathes with this spirit of faith. The doubts and misgivings of the past, were swallowed up in the moment of triumph. No longer do Israel's sons press as yesterday, around their venerable leader, demanding, with fierce looks and in tones of bitter irony, if there are no graves in Egypt that he must take them into the wilderness to die. Old unbelief, unable to face the testimony of such prodigious events, slunk away into obscurity; joy found expression in the timbrel and the dance; and when the song was like to have languished, Faith caught up the strain, continued the story, and o'erleaping the wilderness, predicted the conquest of Canaan itself.

Brethren, would you be strong in faith? Would you enjoy more sweetly the delicious repose accompanying simple trust in God, and possess in still greater degree that peace of God whose course is like the gentle gliding of a river? Would you have more fully at your disposal the single key which admits to all the treasures of Heaven, and carry with you in yet larger measure, a cordial that will cheer the spirit though the body languish, and revive and strengthen even when that body is falling to decay? Would you be prepared for life's sternest conflicts, and when the phrenzy of battle is maddest, and the tide of strife seems most uncertain, still expect victory? Would you know that

courage which, when all is past, will even admit the last visitor: Death at the door, while you calmly attire your spirit for its departure? Come, let us steal to Calvary. There let us snatch a glimpse of Deity, nay, more, let us look on until our sins be gone and our hearts melted; until love rise to a vehement flame, and here faith in the prospect of Him, in whom dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily, shall begin to perceive the greatness of her resources, and the secret of her power.

Unconverted one, will you not come and receive from Christ what His people find to be so precious? Faith in Him has saved us; it now sustains us; it will introduce us to eternal bliss. This faith may be had for the asking, a glimpse of Jesus will instantly bestow it; but remember, "without faith it is impossible to please God."

(3.) Enlarged views of God also suggested to the Israelites, a *seasonable comparison.* "Who is like unto Thee, O Lord among the gods? Who is like thee?" Great and mighty deeds have been ascribed to other gods. Kings there have been who have gone forth with their armies and whose very approach has made the nations to tremble, but who is like Thee? The dominions of the pretended lords of the elements Thou hast invaded, and with scornful might has snatched the sceptre of their rule, as for Pharaoh, "his chariots and his host hast thou cast into the sea." Thus they concluded the infinite superiority of the King of Kings, and the miserable insignificance of all pretenders. A glimpse of Deity had infused spirit and courage into their souls and had exhibited to unfettered minds the just relations of the creature with the Creator.

So too, he who in days of time-serving and man-worship, when the rich are pandered to for their wealth, and the wise are courted for their approval, and the great are fawned upon for their influence, and apologists for truth, humbly kneeling at the feet of power, are begging leave to be. When God's Gospel is summoned to the bar of Human Reason, and a refined age with many apologies begs to correct the judgment of inspiration. When the essential and fundamental truths of God's word are toned down, or altogether explained away, to please the professed delicacies of an infidel society—He who, under the pressure of such circumstances, would still maintain his integrity, and rising superior to the servile spirit of his times, even from the pillory of public ridicule would still declare his deathless adherence to the simple Gospel—he who would do this, from whence shall he obtain the potent impulse that shall bear him thus irresistibly forward? Not from his own heart, nor from the hearts of his fellows; not from books though written in lines of fire; but away there where no human foot intrudes, bowing in mighty prayer; from the heart of God he shall drink it, with the breath of God he shall imbibe it, in the presence of God he shall possess it; for there is nothing which destroys so effectually the fear of man in the believer, as a glimpse of Deity.

(4.) I think, too, I can hear in my text, the ring of scornful defiance of *God's enemies.*

Pointing triumphantly to the dark waters at their feet, and beyond to the land of Egypt still writhing beneath the rod of the Almighty, the hordes of Jacob shouted a fearless challenge to the foes of God. They had seen God, had seen irreproachable holiness, peerless dignity, and all-conquering might, arrayed on their behalf; and when they turned to consider human powers and forces, so great, so strange, so even ludicrous was the contrast, that with overflowing scorn and derisive laughter they called upon the gods, as if to know *who next* would offer battle to Omnipotence! And we can regard with equal scorn the most inveterate antagonism to the Gospel. Anxious friends with pale faces and white lips are met, speeding breathless to head-quarters with the appalling

intelligence, that the murky waters of Roman Catholicism are certainly submerging the land. Others, with equal manifestations of fear, assert as their grave and solemn opinion, that we are rapidly being transformed into a race of infidels. The pestilence of Popery, they declare, walketh in darkness, and the destruction of a bolder Rationalism wasteth at noon-day. Who then are these, that they should excite such dread and threaten such devastations? Are they God to kill and to make alive? Beneath the heat of Jehovah's wrath, like grass of the field, they would wither and consume in a moment. Therefore we despise their feebleness, and treat with disdain their unparalleled presumption. Our unwavering conviction is that the wrath of God must win its way, and the darkness of error roll back before the advancing light. To those who point with afflicted looks to Atheists and Papists, and Jesuits, and Ritualists, we hasten to make reply in the conclusive language of the Apostles, "If God be for us, who can be against us." The captain of the host may sometimes seem for a while to forsake the field, and the cause of truth may appear to flag, but, as of late in awakened and rejoicing Britain, ere long He surely appears, clothed in the garments of victory; and rallying His fainting army to a heroic enthusiasm, charges at their head the bewildered enemy, whose broken ranks and scattered flight clearly testify that God is in the midst of His Church. The Gospel is still in Divine keeping, and this the servants of God well know.

Hence, working with the certainty of success, in the confidence that yet "To Christ every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess Him Lord," they are little affected by the supposed triumphs of their adversaries.

(5.) Finally, all these varied feelings were embodied by Israel in the language of praise. Commingled upon the altar of the heart, they mounted in one vast column to the skies. Brethren, have we no melody to bring? Come, let us weave a song for the God of our salvation. From every heart here present let the true incense of thanksgiving arise. To move us to this harmony Affection shall tune our hearts. And, as Faith with reverent hand draws aside the veil, and reveals to our tearful eyes the God we love, be this the music of our spirits,—Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Oh, matchless love! Oh, ineffable splendor! "Who is like unto Thee O Lord among the gods? Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"

For the Christian Messenger.

DAYS OF YORE.

While glancing over the pages of a volume of *The Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine*, on page 16 of Vol. III, I have met with a communication from Rev. Isaac Potter, addressed to the editor, and dated Clements, N. S., May 12, 1810. The letter before me narrates a very remarkable revival of religion in Clements and vicinity. As I went through with the account here furnished, I mentally inquired whether any are *now* living in that town, or elsewhere in my native land, who remember Rev. Mr. Potter, and the work of grace of which he writes. I do not recollect ever hearing the name of Rev. Mr. Potter, whose letter has just fallen under my eye. I do like the way in which he opens his statement of the revival of which he writes. He proposes to tell the Editor of the *Magazine* "What Zion's God is doing here at this time." Now-a-days we hear of the wonderful work done in such a city or town by Rev. Mr. So-and-so. In the inspired records we read that when the Apostles met with any remarkable successes in their work, "All men glorified God for