

P R E F A C E .

By the good hand of our GOD upon us, we continue to the closing month of another year of our EDITORSHIP. Blessed be His holy Name! Yet, the past year has indeed been to ourselves and to the work of our ministry a most eventful one. At the end of January last—on the night of the LORD'S-day, the 30th of that month—the hand of GOD visited us with a paralytic stroke, and in the early morning the Divine visitation was made very apparent. It had been a specially happy and helpful day of service on the immediately previous day, and the last sermon preached occupied a rather prolonged period. The subject of the discourse was found in GEN. vi. 13, 14—the gracious preparation against the Flood, which the LORD made for His redeemed people—“And GOD said unto NOAH, The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them: and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an Ark of Gopher wood: rooms shalt thou make in the Ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.” It was granted to the preacher to realize while proclaiming the truth that the LORD'S way to be ready for a crisis through which His dear people were to pass was to prepare a sure Refuge for them, and that He would *show Himself* to be that REFUGE. They had, consequently, no grounds for being afraid “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee” (Isa. xxvi. 3). That Scripture of truth, dear friends, JEHOVAH has abundantly verified throughout the ensuing ten months of the writer's affliction. Day and night He has been “with” His humble servant, who desires to speak only good of His all-worthy ways—even whether He smite or wound. “He doeth all things well.”

Through the period of incapacitation he has been assisted in the most brotherly and efficient way by the Rev. THOMAS HOUGHTON, of Bath, who has very largely supplied the lack of EDITORIAL service, and has monthly liberally provided for our beloved

READERS a feast of fat things—of wine of the Kingdom—to whom our most grateful thanks are tendered. “In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established” (2 Cor. xiii. 1). By this means the LORD has graciously glorified Himself and has met the spiritual necessities of His people. Much prayer from a wide circle of sympathizing Christian friends has been incessantly offered, and in a wonderful measure it has been Divinely heard and answered.

Since the EDITOR’S return from a prolonged stay at the sea-side in Devonshire, he has briefly addressed his dear congregation on several occasions at St. Mary-le-port, and in October presided at the beloved CLIFTON CONFERENCE once more. With the kind assistance of some brother in the LORD, he hopes to be able in the future to take a part in the public services of the sanctuary among his much-beloved flock, whose prayers have indeed been to him a sweet and powerful solace in his months of affliction. All things are in the tender hands of the LORD. There we humbly and confidently leave them. He doeth all things well. We know it—we have proved it.

“HIMSELF hath done it” all! Oh! how those words
Should hush to silence every murmuring thought!

“Himself hath done it!”—He Who loves me best,
He Who my soul with His own blood hath bought.

“Himself hath done it”! Can it then be aught
Than full of wisdom, full of tenderest love?
Not one unneeded sorrow will He send,
To teach this wandering heart no more to rove.

“Himself hath done it!” Yes, although severe
May seem the stroke, and bitter be the cup,
’Tis His own hand that holds it, and I know
He’ll give me grace to drink it meekly up.

“Himself hath done it!” Oh, no arm but His
Could e’er sustain beneath earth’s dreary lot;
But while I know He’s doing all things well,
My heart His loving-kindness questions not.

“Himself hath done it!” He Who’s searched me through,
Sees how I cleave to earth’s ensnaring ties;
And so He breaks each reed on which my soul
Too much for happiness and joy relies.

“Himself hath done it!” He would have me see
 What broken cisterns human friends must prove;
 That I may turn and quench my burning thirst
 At His own fount of ever-living love.

“Himself hath done it!” Then I fain would say,
 “Thy will in all things evermore be done”;
 E’en though that will remove whom best I love,
 While Jesus lives I cannot be alone.

“Himself hath done it!” Precious, precious words,
 “Himself,” my Father, Saviour, Brother, Friend;
 Whose faithfulness no variation knows;
 Who having loved me, loves me to the end.

And when, in His eternal presence blest,
 I at His feet my crown immortal cast,
 I’ll gladly own, with all His ransomed saints,
 “Himself hath done it”—all, from first to last!

Grace—His own abounding grace—can sweeten the bitterest Providence which He appoints, and make it sweeter than honey or the droppings of the honey-comb to the hearts of the much-exercised saints. It is by these things they really live, and in all these is the life and prosperity of the soul. The blessed HOLY SPIRIT sanctifies our sorrows and griefs, so that they become helpers of our joys and ministers of our bliss. It is in these things that the people of GOD are enabled to yield their “Amen” of resignation to the will of their HEAVENLY FATHER, and glorify His holy Name. So be it in the experience of us all, for thus we serve, honour, and magnify acceptably HIM Whose we are. Brethren, let us increasingly be conformed to the one end and purpose of our heavenly calling, looking for the Lord—our blessed LORD—from heaven—till He come!

THE EDITOR.

CLIFTON, BRISTOL,
 December, 1910.