

Bethel

Prayer Meeting Addresses

Number 76 Continuance!

Reading: Isaiah 64

1 Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence,

2 As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!

3 When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence.

4 For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

5 Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved.

6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our

iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

7 And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

8 But now, O Lord thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.

9 Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people.

10 Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.

11 Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste.

12 Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O Lord? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?

Address

There are four words in this chapter that are often with me and have been for a long time now. The words are these: “In those is continuance.” I should think almost every morning at breakfast time these words flash across my spirit: “In those is continuance.”

"New mercies, each returning day,
Hover around us while we pray."

"It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness." The wonderful mercy and favour of the Lord that not only does He bless us with these things, not only does He give us these things, but He *continues* to give them, despite our failures and sin and our taking things for granted and our lack of gratitude. He *continues* to give them.

"In those is *continuance*." You can think of so many things: His mercy, His forgiveness, His unchanging love, His compassions lengthened out towards us, the way in which He supplies our needs, the way in which He helps in providence, the way He hears and answers prayer, the way He upholds us and keeps us, the way He gives us strength equal to the day, and all centring in that glorious truth: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." It is this ever-flowing fountain that we read of which never will run dry. It is this wonderful fulness in Christ. It is not the cistern waters. There is only some water there, and these cisterns are broken cisterns, and the water is leaking out. What do we sing?

"Where the rich fountain of Thy grace
Stands ever open, full, and free."

It is day by day; it is hour by hour; it is moment by moment.

"In those" – the things of God – "is continuance." And it is just the opposite of earthly things. In them there is not continuance. There was another little word we read: "We all do fade as a leaf." That is you and me personally, but everything here below, fading like a leaf. You see a beautiful flower in the summer, but go there a few weeks later – it is faded; it is withered away; it has died. "We all do fade as a leaf." It is the very opposite of "in those is continuance."

"Fading is the worldling's pleasure,
All his boasted pomp and show;
Solid joys and lasting treasure
None but Zion's children know."

"In those is continuance" – things which never fade. To mention just one this evening: the robe of Christ's righteousness.

"No age can change its glorious hue;
The robe of Christ is ever new."

We and everything connected with us, "we all do fade," but, "in those is continuance."

I said this has been on my mind for a long time and I rather think I did try to preach from it a year last January at the beginning of the year. But though it has been with me continually, it is just this last day or two I have noticed what follows: "And we shall be saved." Mind you, this verse seems to have so many parts, and in some ways you cannot see how they all belong together, but this is how it struck me this last day or two: "In those is continuance, and we shall be saved," and if in those there were not continuance, if they were like worldly things, fading, then we should *not* be saved; we could never be saved.

What if there were no continuance in the mercy of God? What if there were no continuance in the value of His precious, sin-atoning blood? What if there were no continuance in His everlasting love to sinners? Where should we be? What if these things faded like a leaf? But you have two things joined together, which God has joined together, and may no man put them asunder: these things that can never fade away, these streams that can never run dry. "In those is continuance," and *because* in them is continuance, *because* of this, "we shall be saved."

This address was given at Bethel Chapel, Luton, by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom, on Monday, 3rd March, 2014

