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Prayer meeting address by Mr. J. Delves at "Ebenezer" Clapham on
Monday, 19th. November, 1951

Psalm 25.

This Psalm, which is expressive in its language, reveals a prayer which came from a contrite heart. The Psalmist was evidently in a place, not only where he felt his need of gracious teaching, but in a place to receive it; his spirit being made meek before the Lord he would have God manifest His mercy to him in forgiveness and in gracious support and consolation in his afflictions. But the point I would just like to refer to is that the Psalmist prays for that which he would have God remember and that which he would have God not remember.

He prays that the Lord would not remember against him the sins of his youth or his transgressions. We are not aware of any particular or outstanding transgressions in respect of the youth of the Psalmist, but there were evidently certain things that left a pain upon his heart in relation to those days for which he felt particular need of the Lord's forgiveness. It may be that some of us even, in looking back to our early days, which were very critical days with us, may feel to have particular need of forgiveness for the follies of our youth, in those days when we had not been brought under that soul concern in such a way as to bring the stamp of death upon the indulgences of this world, but when, if the Lord had not intervened, we should have gone on in that course headlong to our eternal ruin. What a mercy as we look back, as some of us can, I trust with a humble spirit, what mercy it was on the part of God to intervene and bring the solemnities of eternity upon our consciences so as to spoil us to that which is so alluring to flesh and blood. Evidently good John Kent had similar feelings of the Lord's loving-kindness to him when he said -

"Preserved in Jesus when
My feet made haste to hell,
And there should I have gone
But Thou dost all things well.
Thy love was great, Thy mercy free
Which from the pit delivered me.

O what a wonder of wonders if you and I can look back upon the Lord's divine protection and preservation from participating in these things which would have brought guilt and hardness of heart and, if left to ourselves, terminated in our eternal ruin.

"Remember not the sins of my youth nor my transgressions." The Psalmist had evidently on many occasions felt a sweet taste of the Lord's pardoning love, but even though that was so, he had not got beyond a desire for a renewing of it in his soul's feelings. So it may be with some of us. Perhaps if we can hope that we have felt a taste of forgiveness, a long time ago, we may long for a renewing of that blessing and the joy that attended it, so that again we may walk in the liberty of His blessed Gospel and in the light of His countenance.

But the Psalmist would have the Lord remember His loving-kindnesses. "Remember, O Lord, Thy tender mercies and Thy loving-kindnesses, for they have been ever of old." Here we have indeed cause to unite with the Psalmist and to pray that the Lord would remember, that is would have regard to, the loving-kindnesses of former days and would renew them. Some of us trust we can look back upon His former loving-kindness where the good hand of our God appeared to us, when He remembered us in our low estate, because His mercy endureth for ever, and looked upon us when we were, according to the figure, like the infant cast out into the open field. And what a favour it is if we can look back to that time when the Lord took pity upon us and said: "Behold, I passed by thee and spread My skirt over thee, and thy time was the time of love. I entered into a covenant with thee and thou becamest Mine." Surely it would break our hearts if we could but have some sweet reviving in our souls of the Lord's former loving-kindness in thus remembering us.

Then again we would have Him remember His loving-kindness not only in looking upon us but in His dealings with us, although they have not always been pleasing to the flesh, and have involved a chequered path attended with afflictions and trials in our measure; yet can we not see the Lord's loving-kindness even in the furnace at times, and have felt able even there to sing of mercy and judgment?

Has not His loving-kindness been great toward us in His care for us, which has continued to the present day, so that without presuming and with a humble spirit we would desire to say with the Psalmist in the 23rd. Psalm "Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." Goodness and mercy had followed him, which strengthened him in faith and confidence in an unchanging God to believe that goodness and mercy would follow him all the days of his life. "Remember, O Lord, Thy tender mercies and Thy loving-kindnesses, for they have been ever of old."

Here then are the two points to which the Psalmist would have the Lord attend, and it is rather noticeable that even in referring to the great blessing of the new covenant, the Apostle puts it in that way, even as it is revealed in the Scripture, "Thy sins and thy iniquities will I remember no more." "Behold, I have blotted out thy transgressions, and will not remember thy sins." Surely no loving-kindness on the part of God to poor sinners can be of greater import than making known to them and applying to them the blood of the atonement, whereby their sins are put away to the purging of their conscience and the joy of their soul. The Lord has in His wonderful mercy brought us hitherto and it behoves us to bear a humble witness to divine faithfulness through the years that are past and to make a right use of remembering the way that the Lord has led us, to humble us before Him in brokenness of heart, realising our waywardness and our many transgressions, and yet to be strengthened thereby in relation to the future, that we may not cast away our confidence which hath great recompense of reward. Amen.