

# THE BOYHOOD OF WELL-KNOWN CHRISTIAN MEN

by G.W.

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*Biographical sketches of the childhood experiences of significant Christian leaders including William Farel, Philip Melancthon, George Whitefield, Adoniram Judson, William Wilberforce, and the Earl of Shaftesbury.*

7 Chapters

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## 1 William Farel.

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William Farel. A Fearless Preacher in Reformation Times. The early days of William Farel were spent in a mountain village bearing the family name, near the town of Gap, in Dauphiny. That beautiful and fertile province in the South-east of France, is situated by the Italian frontier, and overlooked by the majestic Alps, with their snowy summits and interesting scenery. His father was a nobleman, living in the honour of his earthly position, so that the old family mansion was greatly superior to the humble homes of the villagers near. William was born in the year 1489 — one long to be remembered by the poor suffering Waldenses as that of fierce persecution, which had also characterised the previous year. Cruel scenes of bloodshed, therefore, were enacted not far from the beautiful home of the Farel's, but being staunch papists, they sympathised with the oppressors, and the cry of the oppressed troubled them not. Ah, little could bigoted man foresee, that that helpless babe coming at a time when papal rage was triumphant, would, in the vigour of manhood, break its yoke from many a neck, and unmask its evils, with an unsparing hand!

William's lot was cast in a religious home. That means one, in which a constant and careful observation was given, to those works of the flesh, which were considered good and acceptable to God. Instead of accepting His terms, and His free gift, the natural heart of man labours, in its ignorance, to do that which is impossible. The Holy Ghost has written to us regarding this error, in Romans 8:8 : "They that are in the flesh cannot please God."

William Farel's youth was spent in the blindness of unbelief and superstition, and though he early learned to read, he knew nothing in those days, of the only Book in the world which is of infinite worth. Instead of learning that there is only One who can hear and answer prayer in the name of Jesus, the credulous boy was taught to pray to angels and saints, while his mind was filled with foolish fables, and supposed miracles. It was truly the blind leading the blind, and the plastic mind of the child was the soil in which the enemy sowed these false traditions, by means of deluded parents.

Farel was wont to relate some of the follies of those early days, as in after life he remembered, with regret, the sins of his youth. He acted ignorantly and in unbelief, no doubt, but he afterwards learned that his darkened state did not excuse the deeds of darkness flowing from it. God in His mercy has made provision for sins of ignorance, and the believer can say that "the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Many a soul, even in the present day, seeks to cover its guilt by the simple words, "I did not know;" but the word of God plainly shews that we are responsible to know what He has revealed. In John 7:17, we read, "If any one desire to practise his will, he shall know concerning the doctrine." (New Trans.) Human will and ignorance are generally closely allied, and the former is simply pleasing one's self, which conscience and the scriptures make plain to the soul, can never be pleasing to God.

After the light of the written word had shone in on Farel's soul in later days, he wrote and spoke of his youth in no measured language, as he grieved intensely over the guilt which he felt had been his. When only seven years of age, he went with his parents to see a piece of wood, which the

priests affirmed to be part of the cross on which the Lord Jesus was crucified. It was ornamented with copper, which was said to have been part of the basin used by the Son of God to wash the disciples' feet.

I do not tell you all that was thus falsely affirmed of that so-called holy cross, for it would only fill the mind with the repetition of folly and wickedness. The child, young as he was, felt greatly disturbed in his mind, but the parents questioned not the truth of all that they saw, and the wonderful tales poured into their ears. They did not dare to allow even a thought that anything could be untrue or unholy in the ways of priest or people, whatever the outward appearance might indicate. Many things therefore combined to make religion an unsolved problem to that young thinking soul.

William possessed a reflecting mind, but was not the less behind his brothers, nor other boys, in the adventurous pursuits of his mountain home. In common with those who live amid such wild scenery, he delighted in the difficulties, and feared not the dangers of the Alpine height, or rocky gorge. He entered into all with boyhood's keen enjoyment, both using and invigorating his health thereby. So adventurous and full of spirit was he, that his father thought a soldier's life would be the most suitable one to give scope to the energy of his character.

William, however, soon manifested desires after a totally different life to that proposed by his father. He wished for earthly fame and greatness, and thought that to be a man of learning and an author, would best accomplish this ambitious purpose. Thus we see how all the natural thoughts of the human heart revolve around one's self, as the only object to please in life, while in reality God has given this brief span, that we may learn therein how to live to His glory. It was not in the days of his boyhood that Farel learned this, but his desires towards education were overruled by God, to bring him within reach of the glad tidings of salvation. The father by no means approved of the son's desire to study, yet he yielded to his wishes, and was willing to let him have a tutor, to give him lessons in Latin. But no such teaching was to be found near Farel's home, and he searched in vain for some man of sufficient Latin education. He was horrified to find, not only ignorance where he expected learning, but also sinfulness, where he thought to see holiness. He saw how hollow were all the vain pretensions of the priests and monks, and how little faith they themselves seemed to have, in the routine of their religious lives.

God thus used this educational disappointment to shew that earnest youth the utter vanity of a form of godliness, which denies the power thereof. "Not of works, lest any man should boast." In God's purposes too, the inability to find a tutor was the means used to lead him to the place where he would be taught of God, and learn, for the first time, the way of salvation, as all of grace.

William's next attempt to reach his mental goal, was to request his father to send him to Paris University. The capital was a long way off, and travelling not so rapid as in our day. The separation, therefore, seemed greater then than now, so that the parents' consent was only reluctantly obtained. On receiving this permission, however, the son eagerly set out to meet the accomplishment of his cherished hopes and desires, and he reached them eventually, far beyond his expectations. He was twenty years of age when he thus exchanged the parental roof for a student's life in Paris. We can now look at him only for a little longer, and leave William Farel as of age — a boy no longer. In Paris, Latin lessons were easily obtained, while Hebrew and Greek were also within reach. He was therefore able to gratify to the full his great desire for study. This

extended to the reading of the scriptures, which shook the idolatrous foundations on which his religion had hitherto rested. As a soul groping in darkness, he had long desired to meet with a man devoted to his creed. This was attained in Paris, when he met with Faber. They became fast friends, and God converted both Farel and Faber, and used them mutually to each other's blessing. The former had reached the years of manhood, before he knew these two facts — what sin deserves, and what the heart of God has given. Till he learned these, his life-work had not begun, which was to dispel error by the manifestation of divine truth. True, it was not always done gently and quietly, for a good deal was accomplished by force, both by voice and hand, but much courage and faithfulness were displayed, with no small amount of success. The century in which Farel lived was a very remarkable one, because of the revival of great and precious truths, which had been long hidden from sight. An extraordinary impetus was also given to learning, by the labours of men who were life-long students, and able teachers. We can scarcely understand the difficulties which lay in the learner's path in those days, for things were not made so easy and pleasant as they are now. The invention of printing took place about the middle of the sixteenth century, and greatly facilitated the spread of truth and literature.

William Farel shared in these blessings, and, by the grace of God, was wisely directed to see the all-absorbing importance of God's revelation to man. We cannot pursue his life further, however, but leave with the young reader the different steps from childhood, boyhood, and youth, which led to the way of peace, in manhood's riper years. As we see divine love thus following the child, the boy, the lad, till union with Christ was consummated, we may well exclaim with Paul, "O, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

## 2 Philip Melancthon.

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Philip Melancthon. A Light-Bearer in Moral Darkness.

Piety and learning, gentleness and youth, are qualities which immediately suggest themselves to the mind, at the mention of this honoured and well-known name. It may be that association with the more stern and aggressive Luther, has brought into relief the retiring disposition of Melancthon, and that the striking contrast between the two men made their respective characters more distinct. Be that as it may, each had his own peculiar place, doing a needed work in times of great moral darkness, while as warm, devoted friends, they encouraged one another in difficulty or danger. The great movement in which those two friends figured, is familiar to our ears as "The Reformation." Though men were used in it, and nations were even politically affected by it, the active power which was really at work, was "the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God." The world, the flesh, and the devil, had all gained such power over the church, that the full and free salvation of God was put aside for a way in which man could boast. The reading of the scriptures was neglected, and preference given to human teaching, so that Luther and his associates did no ordinary thing when they studied and taught the revelation of God's mind to man.

Forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus, was the truth of God written to ruined man, hundreds of years before. In Acts 13:38, we read: "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." The veil of unbelief had hidden this from the eyes of needy sinners, and now, the Holy Ghost not only bestowed spiritual sight to see that which was revealed, but gave courage to proclaim a divine message in the face of the most violent opposition on every side.

Such were the days in which Melancthon's lot was cast, and a share in this wonderful work was, in the wisdom of God, accorded to him. The days of his childhood were spent in a religious atmosphere, where good works and prayers held a prominent place. If these were the results of faith in the heart, they must have been profitable, but if not, however devout his parents may have been, all would be vain. When only ten years of age, Philip was called to his father's death-bed, to hear his last words and counsel. It is recorded that the dying parent said, "I can foresee that the world is about to be shaken by terrible tempests. Great events are about to happen. May God guide and direct thee!" With the light of subsequent events thrown upon them, these tones seemed forcibly prophetic. The father died two days after, but even before the end, the boy was hurried away that he might not have the sorrow of this death-scene in his home. The sad event made a change of residence necessary for Philip and his brother George, and they then found a home with their grandfather, who gave them equal advantages with his own son.

Under the care of a wise and able tutor, encouraging results were obtained, for God had bestowed on the youth extraordinary mental capabilities, which rapidly developed. With the faculty of gaining knowledge, he possessed the power of a retentive memory, so that he not only learned easily, but remembered and profited by his studies.

Philip's surname was "Schwarzerd," which means in German, "black earth." "Melancthon" has the same meaning in Greek, and this is the name by which he was known through youth and manhood. The change was made by the learned professor Reuchlin, and soon became generally adopted.

Two traits in the lad's character were very attractive to those who knew him, and won for Philip many friends. He was of a gentle nature, and was particularly unassuming in the possession of more knowledge than was usual at his age. His grandfather being a Mayor, received visits, from time to time, from men of note, intellect, and learning. The boys had the mental advantages of such society, but when this relative died, they were obliged to go elsewhere, to pursue their studies at school. Their home-life was then spent under the roof of a lady who was sister to the well-known Reuchlin, and there they frequently met with him. The latter was greatly drawn to Philip, and gave him two valuable gifts, one of which was priceless above all else on earth. These presents were a copy of the Scriptures, and a Greek grammar. How much the recipient valued and studied both, his after life makes strikingly manifest!

Eager in the search after knowledge, Melancthon next passed on to the university of Heidelberg, and thence to Tubingen, which was also a seat of learning. He was everywhere recognized as an unusually clever and studious youth. His strict adherence to the word of God was much observed, but not so applauded as his education. So attached was he to his Bible, that he considered it no trouble to carry the precious book in his hand, even when its presence excited suspicion. Bibles were much more bulky then, than now, so that this youthful student in the sixteenth century, sets us a worthy example, in having the scriptures always at hand. A prayer-book would not have been remarked in the hands of the youth, nor would it have so engaged the attention of others. But being larger, and receiving a greater share of attention, than any empty form of man's arrangement could command, its happy possessor was misjudged and blamed, for they said he was studying a class-book during religious ceremonies. Thus the soul who dares to prefer the simplicity of the word of God to the interpretation put upon it by man, must suffer for its courage and zeal. Satan and his emissaries are ever on the watch, to bring in false witnesses against the upright.

It must have been a beautiful sight in those benighted days of gospel truth, to see this clever young man ever preferring as his choicest company, that holy blessed Book. To be characterised by its presence was an honour, but to be recognised as one who sought to live out the spirit of it day by day was infinitely more. "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." (2 Corinthians 3:6.) So far as Melancthon had learned the scriptures in power, he held fast that which he knew. He also firmly rejected what human teaching he saw to be opposed to the simplicity of the word. Thus was he led on to learn, to believe, to obey, and to teach. At fourteen years of age, Melancthon had taken his degree of bachelor, and two or three years after he was doctor of philosophy, and began to give lessons. His teaching was greatly prized, and even at eighteen he produced written works, which were used and valued for years, in German universities. By Reuchlin's recommendation, a most honourable position in Wittenberg university presented itself, and at twenty-one, the youthful savant began his labours there. Little was expected from Melancthon at first, for his boyish appearance did not betoken such intellectual powers as they had expected. But these learned professors soon found themselves greatly mistaken in the opinion thus prematurely formed. When the unostentatious youth began his public speech a few days after his arrival, he astonished all

who heard by the talents which they saw he possessed, and the cultivation of them which application to study had produced. Even Luther wrote, "Let us beware of despising his age and person, for he is worthy of all honour," and he again mentioned him at this early stage as one "who incites all, of whatever station, to the study of Greek."

We shall not further pursue this remarkable life, as it passed onwards in the current of the wonderful events then taking place. Boyhood was over, and the work of the man entered upon, when, hand in hand with Luther, he sought to use these wonderful talents for God. We do not know much about Melancthon's inner thoughts, but we see the outcome of them in the use which he made of the knowledge he possessed, and the cultivation of the mind which God had given him.

Love for the scriptures is one of the most direct indications of spiritual life, and this was a most prominent feature in that remarkable man, even from boyhood. It does not appear to have been natural courage which enabled the gentle Melancthon to identify himself so fully with the written word, in an age when by many, it was neither known nor valued. But a holy boldness seems to have been manifest, and the power of God sustained him, as he witnessed to the purity and power, of the Book which was his precious and constant companion. How this developed in manhood into defence of the truth, and the high and holy privilege of circulating it, was fully apparent in subsequent events of his life. Luther had need of help in the translation of the Scriptures which he had warmly at heart, and Melancthon's aid was most valuable to him and greatly prized.

We must not confound the natural amiability of character in the latter, with the fruit of the Spirit in him as a child of God, however pleasant to nature the former may have been. Scripture shews that gentleness and meekness ought to be manifest in the believer, as the result of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. Hence that which was the outcome of divine power within him, could only bear the impress of the Spirit of God. Nothing short of this is of any value in God's sight, for He has said: "The flesh profiteth nothing." All therefore, that was profitable in this honoured man, came from God, all that was only human nature, was powerless to act for Him. The Holy Ghost used the unerring word by Philip Melancthon, making his life and lips to testify to its divine and abiding simplicity, and of him we may say, that he lived, "holding forth the word of life."

### 3 George Whitefield.

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George Whitefield. An Earnest Soul-Winner. The early days of this remarkable man were spent amid the uninteresting surroundings of a house called "The Bell Inn," in Gloucester. He was the youngest of seven children, and had only one sister. He lost his father when only two years of age, but the business was continued under his mother's care. She was anxious to give George a good education, and for this, the free Grammar School of his native town afforded every opportunity. Being quick to learn, the boy made rapid progress, so it was with no small reluctance that he was compelled to relinquish his studies at the age of fifteen, and, in obedience to his mother, seek to assist her at home. Think of the altered life for a lad who loved books! — to turn from mental culture in school-life, not only to domestic work, but to sell beer, and wait upon the people who drank it.

Poor boy! he felt the contrast keenly, and was wont to steal away into any retired place he could find, to enjoy the companionship of some favourite work. Dramatic reading suited his tastes at that time, for he knew not God, nor understood the evil of his own heart. He had not been more than a year thus occupied, when his mother transferred the care of the inn to her eldest son, but poor George obtained no change of employment thereby. His aversion to the work was heightened by the presence of his sister-in-law, instead of his mother, and the boy continued unhappy. He had no alternative, however, for a time, but God's eye was watching him, till the moment arrived for deliverance from such uncongenial surroundings. Another brother who lived in Bristol, asked George to spend a little time with him there, and the invitation was gladly accepted. Some preaching to which he listened, while in that city, impressed him greatly, but the only immediate effect visible upon him, was that he began to write sermons, and thought of becoming a clergyman. His studies thus took a religious turn, but he did not know Christ yet, so he could only endeavour "to make a fair shew in the flesh."

Returning to his mother's house in Gloucester, he there met with a young man who had been at school with him, but who was at that time studying at Oxford. He was occupied in waiting upon other students, and for this work received a sufficient equivalent to enable him to meet the expenses of his own education with them. When George heard that in this position of servitor, he might maintain himself while pursuing a course of study, as his old school-mate was doing, he began to think about applying for such a post. His mother agreed, and preparatory to the university training, George went again to the old familiar school, to spend his time over Latin and Greek, till he could be received at Oxford. His mother aided in the project, and at eighteen years of age, the desired opening was obtained through her efforts, and her next care was how to provide a suitable outfit, and travelling expenses.

Sufficient for these needs was lent by a friend, and bright with hope, young Whitfield diligently began his studies at the university. He soon repaid all the expectations which were centred in him, by applying himself, with great energy of purpose, to his books.

Charles and John Wesley were then studying at Oxford, and had gathered around them some religious companions, who were wont to meet together for mutual help and encouragement. Whitfield soon heard of this little company, and longed much to get acquainted with the two brothers, who were thus seeking to influence others for good. After he had been in Oxford about a year, a circumstance occurred, which brought him into contact with these young men, in a very simple way. Becoming interested in the sad case of a poor woman who had endeavoured to commit suicide, he wished much to help her morally, but knew not how to set to work. He thought of Charles Wesley as the most suitable person to advise, and therefore sent to enquire, if he would see her. The messenger was directed not to give Whitefield's name, but did so, and the result was an invitation from Wesley, to breakfast with him next morning.

Whitefield gladly responded, for he was secretly longing for spiritual help, and this, he thought, he might obtain from these earnest men. They were kind to him, lending books which were helpful at the time, but, like a true-hearted soul, Whitefield did not stop to measure himself by his friends, for he pressed on, till he knew more than they. He planted his feet on a divine foundation, when that truth laid hold of his soul in power: "Ye must be born again." He was not ashamed to write to his relations, telling of the necessity of the new birth, nor feared to press the same on others.

Though greatly opposed by many, George Whitefield made his soul's salvation his one care, and unmoved by man's disapproval, gave himself to such work as he thought would please God. The "sick or in prison," received his attention, so did the poor and needy, in other quiet ways. He had some reproach to bear on account of his zeal, because being poor, and in earnest, he was disliked, and spoken against, by those who were rich, and lived in ease. More over he endeavoured to bear all that came upon him as for Christ's sake, remembering that He will abundantly make up for all that His disciples may give up for Him. In spite of George Whitfield's devotion, however, he was not yet at rest, for he had not learned a full salvation, in God's simple, perfect way, but was really labouring to reach it. He made known his state of unrest to his respected friend, Charles Wesley, for, finding out the evil of his own heart to be incurable, according to the scriptures, he longed for deliverance from its power. Had he turned direct to God, he would have been encouraged, but by reading the books they lent to him, he only got further astray, and grew disheartened in his search for light. Endeavouring to follow the rules given in these, the poor seeking soul only got deeper and deeper into the mud of human imagination, of which man is so foolishly vain.

Whitefield's days were, at this stage, spent in prostration of body, and a forced humiliation, in the futile hope of reaching God's free gift in this way. He had not yet learned "That no flesh should glory in his presence;" for his constant cry was for a better heart. God's answer to the suppliant shewed him how ineffectual all his efforts must be to remedy that which God had condemned and judged in the death of His beloved Son.

Whitefield sought to conquer his will according to the instructions given in the books he read, and thus hoped to obtain salvation. Alas, that unbelief should so deprive many an earnest soul of that divine deliverance which is the practical consequence of knowing that the believer has died with Christ! Not only that Christ has suffered for sins, but that, in his death, everything belonging to the flesh has gone from God's sight, in the perfect oblivion of the grave. The soul which knows this truth practically, no longer vainly seeks to master or keep in check the will, but refuses to own it at

all.

Another of these false religious rules was, to remain in the seclusion of his room, till he could come up to a certain standard which was set before his mind. Rigidly following out every regulation laid down in his books, the poor misguided soul was only plunged deeper into darkness and distress, by the deceitfulness of his natural heart. Many painful efforts were made, such as fasting, praying out in the cold at night, preserving an unusual silence, and similar religious follies, but all was in vain. His beloved friends, Charles and John Wesley, sought to dissuade him from such foolish doings, but he heeded them not, and thought it right to give up their hitherto valued company. At last, the hand of God was gently laid upon him, and this divine chastening sufficed to draw the weak and ignorant sufferer to a knowledge of God's love in Christ. For weeks and months, he thus learned in the school of God, and then his soul emerged from the mists of earth, into the brightness of a new and divine position, for George Whitefield had, at length, obtained peace in believing. When convalescent, the young man went to his own home, and there gave himself to the study of the word of God. Then he began to feed upon Christ, and his soul learned the liberty which results from the ungrieved action of the Holy Spirit. All seemed new, and he owned now that a few weeks' study of the Scriptures, taught him more than all the writings of man he had ever perused. Whitefield found out too, what it was to have God's thoughts instead of his own, thus tasting the sweetness of communion. But we must now take our leave of the boy George, for at this stage, he had reached the years of manhood, and the restless strivings of his youth gave place to active faith, in riper years. Ere long, he awoke the British Isles by the earnestness of his gospel preaching and burning love for souls. The power of God was with him, and in days when open-air gatherings for the gospel were rarely to be seen, Whitefield's zeal brought thousands to listen, and many to be blessed. Multitudes of souls dead in sin were reached, and numbers of sleeping Christians woke up, to find that God expects reality.

Thus George Whitefield became an honoured servant of the living God — a man in earnest, having one purpose in life, and he nobly fulfilled his aim. Willing to be anything that he might win souls for Christ, he was an out-and-out man in his onward course, and the seal of God's approval of his faithfulness was given in the awakening of thousands to a sense of their need. Wherever he turned his steps with God's glad tidings, in England, Scotland, Ireland or Wales, multitudes flocked to listen, and hung with marked attention on his wonderful message from God. Across the wide Atlantic too, he carried the glad news, bringing blessing to souls, not only in America, but on board the vessel that carried him thither.

Beautiful indeed is the picture presented to our minds by the record of his voyage, and the manifest tokens of the power of God, in a man who burned with love for precious souls! When he set sail from England, he found himself in the company of unbelieving ones, godless, indifferent, and hardened, to whom his only opportunity of testimony was a turn of the head, and a look towards some sinner more bold than the rest. He had not even a quiet spot where he could be alone with God, and preaching, or even reading with those on board, seemed, to the natural eye, well-nigh impossible.

"According to your faith be it unto you," is a divine principle for blessing between the needy soul and a giving God. Whitefield expected blessing, and the Lord gave it, first a retired place for prayer, then a way to the hearts of many, and eventually opportunities in which to minister to the

sick, and the frequent preaching of the gospel, till the blessing of the Lord had spread over the ship. Looking back on this voyage, he thus wrote in after years: "A consciousness that I had in view the glory of God, and the good of souls, from time to time, afforded me unspeakable satisfaction." This is only one example, among many, of the way in which Whitefield began on barren soil, labouring with God, in patient perseverance, till the blessing came down in rich abundance through the Word. At Bristol, his open-air preaching to twenty thousand colliers, moved hearts there, and melted to tears multitudes unaccustomed to weep and mourn over sin. In other large cities and towns, he attracted immense crowds, always to pour forth the burden of his heart, which was the need of lost and ruined souls "Ye must be born again."

Whitefield was greatly ridiculed because of the constant reiteration of this all-important truth, and if he knew popularity, he also experienced persecution.

Attempts were even made to take his life, but he could afterwards rejoice that curiosity to see the preacher on whose life murderous hands had been laid, only brought an increase of numbers to hear the gospel. Thus lived and laboured a devoted man, till in the fifty-sixth year of his age, he entered into rest on the 30th September, 1770. Though long in a condition of weakness, even the last day spent on earth found him sounding forth the glad tidings of salvation, from lips so soon to be sealed in death.

"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

## 4 Adoniram Judson.

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Adoniram Judson. A Gospel Preacher to Heathen Hearers.

Enlightened America gave Adoniram Judson birth, benighted Burmah witnessed his life-long labours, and the boundless ocean received his dust, when the spirit returned to God who gave it. Sixty-one years of precious time lay between that cradle in the West, and the lonely grave in Eastern seas, making up a life full of talents, and pursued with rare devotion, during half its course. The simplicity of infancy, the expanding intellect of boyhood, even to the self-will of youth, were each, in turn, divinely overruled in the preparation of heart, which is from the Lord. Then when the light of God shone in upon his soul, and love divine was made known to his heart, the vigour of manhood was yielded up to God, and Christ, not self, became the object of life.

Young Judson's father was a man who commanded the respect of those who knew him well, and therefore exercised his own peculiar influence over the early life of this promising child. He expected a wonderful future for his boy, so much as to predict for him, at the age of ten, a distinguished career, in the few brief words, said in affection, "You will one day be a great man." This prediction came true in later years, but his life-work needed the preparatory training which he received in boyhood, that the clay might be formed in the hands of the Potter, and the vessel made meet for the Master's use.

Adoniram began to learn his letters when only between two and three years of age, and being easily taught, he made rapid progress, and was early encouraged to read the Scriptures. Even at four, the child showed an innate desire to impart to others what he had already learned, often gathering around him a little group of children, in his play, and talking to them in a fashion that was meant for preaching.

Study frequently superseded play with Adoniram, for while other boys were in the enjoyment of needed recreation, he might have been seen in some distant nook, enjoying his valued pastime in the productions of a favourite author. His father's library did much to form his mental tastes, and he made the most of his access to its treasures, in the cultivation of his mind when at home.

Young Judson's earliest thoughts regarding his soul's salvation, seem to have arisen during a very serious illness which brought him to the verge of the grave. The boy feared to enter eternity unsaved, and because of this, his sins rose before him in alarming magnitude. Anxiety lessened after the crisis was over, and then earthly aspirations seemed to smother, for a time, his desires for something real and morally profitable. At times the beautiful life of a humble follower of the Lord Jesus, would open out before him; and he wondered in himself if that were not the truest greatness. As he pondered the fact, that "the time is short," he could not deny the inward suggestion, that at last, it would be more satisfactory to have pleased God rather than men. In the multiplicity of his thoughts he found out a most important truth, in the discovery that, at heart, he really did not wish to be converted. The Spirit of God was thus revealing to this inquiring soul, its own state — the first need of the sinner. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." (Romans 8:7.)

At the age of sixteen, young Judson went to college, and there devoted himself thoroughly to study, carrying off the palm, though in the list with the most clever competitors. When the president of the college wrote of this to the father of the successful student, he entered more into particulars than the youth had done, while he also commended him very highly, and touchingly expressed a wish for his conversion to God.

Alas! how busy and eager the enemy of souls was to beguile that favoured youth, round whom so many hopes were gathered! One college friend became his constant companion; for, being clever, bright, and witty, he had soon gained young Judson's affections. A dangerous companion he proved to be, for he was one of those subtle reasoners who refuse to believe what they cannot explain in the word of God. Such cavilings seem plausible to the human mind, for the natural man does not know his own condition of moral blindness. Only the Holy Ghost, who wrote the scriptures, can explain them, and He has written, "No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation."

Judson's friend did not deny the existence of God, but he did not own a revelation from Him, and was thus a daring and avowed deist. The former was therefore soon and easily entangled in the meshes of human reasoning and unbelief — professing to doubt that which he did not understand. Filled with ambitious thought as to the profession they should choose, these young men spent their time in folly, "having no hope, and without God in the world." In the mercy of God, a parting time came, and the two met no more on earth, for a brief period of time irrevocably decided eternity for each. The deist died shortly after, leaving no trace which could give hope to his startled friend, of any submission to Christ, without which there could be no salvation. But God had bright and happy days for young Judson, who was shortly after brought to see himself a sinner, and after many a struggle, yielded to Christ, under the constraining power of the Spirit of God.

Before this, the most important event in his history, took place, he passed through varied circumstances, which served to teach him his own folly and need, as well as the longsuffering of God. Wishing to see a little of life, Judson set out on a tour through a part of his native land, with that object in view. In New York, he found his way one night to the theatre, and the next he had joined the theatrical company, imagining that seeing their life would be a help to his literary pursuits. For eight days, Judson indulged this exercise of his will and desires, before any marked disturbance of his mind took place. But longer he could not stay, for thoughts of his parents' grief stole over him and touched his heart, while doubtless, their prayers were also moving his conscience by the Holy Ghost. In short, he became really anxious about his soul, but still endeavoured to hush its cravings after something holier and more satisfying than the empty frivolities which surrounded him. As the young man thought of his danger, he tried to make himself believe that he was not afraid, and that it was necessary he should thus see life. But conscience triumphed, and instead of continuing his pursuit of the drama, he bent his steps to the home of a relation, intending to travel still farther. There again, God met him, and spoke to him through an earnest preacher who was staying in the house at the time. Occupied with divine things himself, he spoke out of the abundance of his own heart, and the young man was irresistibly drawn towards him. Not only was Judson's heart attracted, but the conscience was also reached, and his guilty state before God, alarmed him. The arrow of conviction lodged within, for the Spirit had wounded that He might heal, though the smitten one did not fully realise his condition of great need and imminent peril.

Judson was endeavouring to continue his intended tour, when he heard of the death of his deist friend, and then utterly wretched, he turned his steps homewards instead. In short, the Holy Ghost had implanted life in his soul, and he saw what his natural state was as a lost sinner, but he did not know what it is to have peace with God, for he had not trusted Christ as his Saviour. At last, he saw that the precious blood had been shed, which cleanseth from all sin, and believing, he got peace. This was the turning-point in his life. The question now was, How could he best spend his life for God? Ambition was put aside; earthly greatness had no claims. One thing alone impelled him, and that was the constraining love of Christ. The overflow of this was the desire to serve. Ecclesiastical positions of eminence, and brilliant prospects opened out before him, but Judson quietly put everything of the kind aside, for the loneliness, the sorrow and the sufferings of a missionary's life, in heathen Burmah. He preferred thus to labour in telling dark souls of a living Saviour's love, rather than enjoy the ease and luxury of an American home. From the time that the desire thus to serve took possession of his soul, till the closing hours of a useful and devoted life, love for the Master going out towards the perishing, filled his heart with an all-absorbing power. Oh, what a reproof to lives of pampered ease, was that of the devoted and honoured Judson! How one sees the power of one Object in the path, characterising the servant, as he pressed on in obedience, according to his light. My reader may not feel called to any prominent service, either in this or heathen lands, but the future is greatly determined by the present. If God has given you desires after Himself, look to Him for power to carry them out. Let not one fall to the ground through moral laziness and apathy. You will get what you aim at, for, if your mark is Christ, the Spirit of God, who forms your desires, will surely work them out into the reality and practice of daily life. Desires lack not, for God never fails, but the moral power to deny self, is frequently the point where we come short.

"If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am, there shall also my servant be; if any man serve me, him will my Father honour."

## 5 William Wilberforce.

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William Wilberforce. The Slave's Friend,

William Wilberforce was the only son of a prosperous merchant in Hull, and was born on the 24th of August, 1759. His circumstances were, therefore, easy and comfortable, and so far as this life was concerned, he possessed a name which had long been influential and respected in Yorkshire.

He was a delicate child, and small for his years, but his mental powers amply compensated for lack of physical strength. That which characterised the man was early manifest in the boy, namely, the mind rising superior to outward influences instead of being overcome by them. With much vigour and intellect, Wilberforce possessed keen affections, and a heart readily occupied in the welfare of others. He was remarkably thoughtful in his ways for a child, and this beautiful trait in his childhood is worth remarking, as strikingly indicative of the character afterwards developed. A friend who was often a visitor at his home, was greatly struck with this exceeding thoughtfulness, and wrote as follows: "I shall never forget how he would steal into my sick-room, taking off his shoes, lest he should disturb me, and, with an anxious face, looking through my curtains to learn if I was better." At the age of seven years, Wilberforce was sent to the grammar school in his native town, and gave great satisfaction to his masters during two years of study there. He had the comfort and privilege of home in the evenings, and the valuable training of a good schoolmaster and his assistant by day — advantages not to be lightly prized in the life of any child, rich or poor. Death soon entered the former, however, and the associations of the school were broken up in consequence, but in after-life, the master and pupil had opportunities of shewing, by an increasing friendship, their continued appreciation of each other. In consequence of the death of his father in 1768, William was placed under the care of an uncle, and this necessitated a change of residence. His home was then, for a time, in the house of the latter at Wimbledon, where he was again sent to school. There however, he was a boarder, and thus lost the influence of home-life, for which there were no advantages obtained at school which could compensate for the loss. Two years were thus spent, happily broken at intervals by the holidays enjoyed at his uncle's, a visit now and then to a relative in Nottingham, and also to his own home in Hull. A marked influence was exercised over the boy in that Wimbledon household, for there christian principles were instilled, which, in their vitality, were new to the fatherless child. His mother was not then converted, and could not therefore appreciate the training given by her brother-in-law and his wife, who were thus occupied with the soul's eternal welfare.

Before William had reached his twelfth birthday, he had already given evidence of much interest in divine things. The years which unhappily followed this seed-time, so smothered the thoughts and feelings of these hopeful days, that he seemed scarcely able afterwards to say, whether eternal life began then or not. His own words ran thus: "Under these influences my mind was interested by religious subjects. How far these impressions were genuine I can scarcely determine, but at least, I may venture to say that I was sincere. There are letters of mine, written at that period, still in existence, which accord much with my present sentiments."

If the boy was happy at Wimbledon, however, the mother in Hull was ill at ease about him. Strange to say, she was greatly alarmed regarding her son's state, and feared intensely that he would become a methodist, if longer left with his uncle and aunt. She therefore removed her son from their home and influence, and, sad to relate, sought to divert the mind of her child from spiritual things to worldly.

It was with feelings of the keenest regret that the youth left the pious influence of the home circle which for four years he had increasingly enjoyed, even though it was to return to the parental roof, to have his mother's care and his sister's company. He afterwards spoke of being almost broken-hearted at the separation, for he had no taste for the worldliness which he received in exchange, and in heart he was with the methodists still. Affection was sorely tried, but what he did not then understand, he could afterwards see was God's overruling hand, to serve a purpose in his life.

Regarding this matter, Wilberforce afterwards wrote: "If I had stayed with my uncle, I should probably have been a bigoted, despised methodist; yet to come to what I am, through so many years of folly as those which elapsed between my last year at school and 1785, is wonderful. Oh the depths of the counsels of God! What cause have I for gratitude and humiliation."

Wilberforce was twelve years old, when he returned with his mother to Hull, and even at that tender age, he was led into the folly and excitement of a purely worldly life, and encouraged to pursue its course, till early impressions seemed gone. His references to this in later years, is full of profit and warning; "This mode of life was at first distressing to me, but by degrees I acquired a relish for it, and became as thoughtless as the rest."

He was very musical, and excelled in singing, making his company strikingly attractive in a world which needs to be amused. In course of time, he found out how such natural gifts became ensnaring to his soul by their very attractive qualities, for they made him an object of admiration, and fostered the desire for it. Love of pleasure rapidly took possession of the youth, and lessened any inclination for the steady application which his studies required. His compositions cost him less labour than his schoolfellows needed to give to theirs, but instead of improving the extra time thus gained, the hours were only idly frittered away. He not only produced his exercise more speedily, but also in a far superior style, to any of his class-mates. That abhorrence of the slave trade which led Wilberforce onward till he was the means of emancipating thousands of slaves, was manifested in action, even at the early age of fourteen years. The following story was related by a gentleman in illustration of this, recalling the days when they were at school together, and is thus recorded in his biography: "He boarded in the master's house, where the boys were kept within bounds. I lived in the village. One day he gave me a letter to put into the post office, addressed to the editor of the York paper, which, he told me, was in condemnation of the odious traffic in human flesh."

Wilberforce entered Cambridge University at the age of seventeen, with scholastic attainments of no mean order even then, in spite of the time he had wasted in the indulgence of his love of pleasure in the world. Alas! college life only brought fresh and powerful temptations to the attractive youth, and for a time, he yielded to society which was depraved and debasing. But the transition from folly to vice, was not gradual enough to ensnare him fully, for he loathed the sins that were so daringly committed, and his first year saw an end to this unholy intercourse. For two

years more, the worldling pursued his self-pleasing course, but then it was in company which did not so roughly shock his sense of right and wrong. He was courted and flattered because of his talents and his wealth, while his generous hospitality, and affectionate disposition, also gathered many around him. Some true friends he met, whose intimacy survived to later years, but the majority of his companions only exercised a pernicious influence over him, judging from the statements he made when he knew himself better.

Wilberforce did not require to push on for the same reason as poor students must do, for time had no money value for him. Even when he wished to study, his companions would remind him of his ample means, and tell him that he need not apply himself so vigorously. Thus he was led on farther and farther in his blindness, fully illustrating the words of Scripture: "Evil communications corrupt good manners." His rooms were frequented by a set of gay and pleasure-loving young men, and his liberal means enabled him to spend freely towards their entertainment. As is usually the case in such circumstances, the centre of the circle was the man who could best minister to their worldly desires, as they did to his vanity.

Though this condition of things was very sad indeed, yet the young man was mercifully dealt with, in being preserved from the excesses in which his companions delighted. Although, as he said in after years, "he could not look back without unfeigned remorse," yet, he never seems to have plunged into the grosser and outward forms of vice. This looks as if the conscience which was early brought into exercise by the piety of his uncle's household, had never entirely lost its sense of the heinousness of sin, in some of its aspects at least. The same compassionate interest which Wilberforce had shewn when a lad of fourteen in the condition of the poor suffering slave, was again manifest when about twenty-one. In those boarding-school days it was the African negro which had occupied his thoughts; seven years later it was the slave population of the West Indies. A friend of his was about to sail for Antigua, and to him he therefore addressed himself, asking if he would obtain some information on the subject when he should reach his destination. In requesting this, the hope was also expressed that some day he might "redress the wrongs of those wretched and degraded beings." On leaving college, Wilberforce repaired to his own home, carrying in his heart the decision formed at Cambridge, of refusing his father's business which was open to him, and to enter public life instead. He therefore set himself to obtain a seat in parliament as member for his native town. In this he succeeded, and it was in that position that he came forth to prominence, on behalf of the poor down-trodden slave, though it was only gradually that the subject pressed itself upon his notice. The impelling power to action came at last from a woman's heart to this champion of the oppressed, whose sympathies were ready to take definite shape in pleading with power for them. This instrument was Lady Middleton, who had heard from friends once resident in the West Indies, of the terrible cruelties connected with the slave trade. Britain's guilt and responsibility pressed upon her, causing her to ask her husband whether he could do anything to bring the national iniquity before parliament. He said he could not plead, but when some one suggested Mr. Wilberforce as having the gift of eloquence which he lacked, Sir Charles Middleton met his wife's wish in the matter, and wrote to him. This letter called forth the existing sympathies of its recipient, and he henceforth laboured incessantly to bring the British people to a knowledge and sense of the awful character of the sin which was being countenanced by a nation called christian. After rousing public feeling by the facts brought to light, Wilberforce nobly succeeded in pleading the cause of the oppressed to such a powerful extent, that one difficult step

after another was gained, till finally his efforts were crowned with success.

It was impossible to set free, in any general way, the multitude of slaves belonging to British subjects, or stop the trade between one country and another, without having a distinct act of parliament; but this could only be obtained by the influence of public opinion. Wilberforce knew this, and laboured, in much bodily weakness, but with great mental energy, to obtain the necessary decision. He was evidently moved, in his desires for the relief of suffering humanity, by the fact that he wished to live to some good purpose in the world, and believed that to influence the British people and government to abolish slavery, was the way given to him whereby to serve God. Little by little, he was led on, till the grand and needed end was accomplished, bringing about that state of things in Her Majesty's dominions, which enables us to say that a slave cannot breathe on English ground, because the moment he touches British soil, he is free.

Wilberforce had many friends with him in his public efforts, but the desire to accomplish the work went upwards to God, and he owned Him and His might, both before and after. "There will be a day of retribution" he pleaded, "wherein we shall have to give account of all the talents, faculties, and opportunities which have been entrusted to us. Let it not then appear, that our superior power has been employed to oppress our fellow-creatures, and our superior light to darken the creation of our God."

We cannot follow the course of events which led on to the desired consummation, because it would involve subjects beyond our present scope. Suffice it to say that Wilberforce succeeded in his gigantic undertaking, after the persistent and persevering labours of nineteen years. Patiently and vigorously did he pursue his aim during those many eventful days, in which his persuasive eloquence, coupled with a feeling heart and ready sympathies, won for him the final accomplishment of his desires under God. The abolition of slavery became the law of England on March 23rd, 1807. The following touching remarks proceeded from the pen of Wilberforce immediately before the successful issue. "Never surely had I more cause for gratitude than now, when carrying the great object of my life, to which a gracious Providence directed my thoughts twenty-six or twenty-seven years ago, and led my endeavours in 1787 or 1788. O Lord, let me praise Thee with my whole heart: for never surely was there anyone so deeply indebted as myself; which way soever I look, I am crowded with blessings. Oh may my gratitude be in some degree proportionate!"

Shortly before his death in 1833, he breathed the same pious spirit in the words, "I thank God that I should have lived to see the day when England is willing to give twenty millions sterling for the abolition of slavery!" Who can adequately imagine the joy of that emancipation that followed, when thousands of men, women and children, long held in slavery's cruel chains, emerged into the unwonted freedom of a life of liberty! Ah, how dear a treasure is this on earth, and yet, infinitely greater is deliverance from Satan's terrible bondage, and the liberty which the glad tidings of God's grace gives to the sin-bound creature! But alas, the deceitful heart of man knows not the fetters of the enemy nor appreciates the liberty which God alone can give! My reader, are you in slavery? Will you be made free? The Lord Jesus said on earth, (and His words are for every unconverted soul still), "If the Son therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

## 6 The Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury.

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The Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury. A Friend to the Friendless. The name of Lord Shaftesbury has long been held in honour and esteem by many a man, woman, and child who has lived in England during the nineteenth century. It is linked in our minds with a long and useful life, spent in the alleviation of misery in varied forms, from the vigour of his youth and manhood, till the feebleness of fourscore years and more. As a nobleman, and in parliament, he first came forth to public life in England, in occupation with the affairs of the country which had given him birth. Soon, however, the pressure of other and higher claims upon him, gained the mastery of his soul as a Christian, and then a position of prominence before the world, became the result.

Lord Shaftesbury was deeply interested in the needs of the poor and the friendless, and warmly advocated their cause in public, with untiring zeal. Much of the work with which he was associated, was done on a large scale and widely known, so that his name is familiar abroad as well as at home. The rarity, too, of one from the circle of aristocratic life, finding his joy in seeking to lessen the misery of his fellow-creatures was probably the means of bringing the willing worker to the front, at the call of others who regarded the eminence of his title and name.

Before noticing the early days of this well-known nobleman, we may profitably look, for a little, at the expressed habits of his spiritual life. His own statements give a beautiful and instructive key which opens up to view the place he trod on earth. Lord Shaftesbury was a man of prayer, habitually looking to God in dependence before acting, and turning to Him with thanksgiving afterwards. His first speech in parliament, was delivered, after asking most earnestly for aid and courage, and when it was over, the applause of his friends was not allowed to interfere with a speedy return to his own room, there to give thanks to God his Father. "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name;" was thus a principle very early made manifest in his career. His own words on the subject ran thus: "Prayer to begin, prayer to accompany, and prayer to close any undertaking for His service, is the secret of all prospering in our ways."

Let us go back to the opening years of this useful life, and, see the subject of our chapter as Lord Ashley, for he reached the ripe years of manhood, before succeeding to his father's title and position. His childhood was not by any means bright, but he learned to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ then, and early experienced the peace which flows from faith in God. Therefore, out of the saddest of his days, the greatest blessedness sprang, which far more than outweighed the sorrows of the child, and the absence of natural joys in his youth.

"Oh the joy for ever flowing, From God's thoughts of His own Son! Oh, the peace of simply knowing, On the cross that all was done!" The surroundings of Lord Ashley's infancy were of the most worldly character, for his parents were occupied with the things of time, and could not train the child for God. The Lord had fitted another in the household to do this needed work, however, and the lack in the family only brought the child more constantly under the power of a godly influence in the nursery. This was a faithful old servant who had been Lady Shaftesbury's maid before her marriage, and continued to serve her mistress after that event, in her new home. She

eventually accepted the responsible position of nurse, and in this capacity, was used of God, to sow the good seed of the word in young Ashley's heart, though she did not live to see the manifold results. The noble work of moulding an infant mind in wisdom's ways, was thus committed to a woman's trust, who was walking in the fear of the Lord herself. A strong attachment bound those two hearts together, the elder nearly done with time, the younger only entering into life. The pious nurse became the confidante of all the little sorrows of childhood's day, while the precious soul for which she was responsible, was carefully taught in the ways of the Lord. The child eagerly drank the water of life, and greatly prized the dear faithful woman who brought it within his reach, by the word of God. The glad tidings, of salvation gave joy to their hearts, because they not only heard, but also believed. "Let him that is athirst come and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Well and wisely, did that pious woman do her work, and she may have been able to rejoice that her labour was not in vain, in the Lord. The child was only a few years under her care, yet before he had reached the age of seven, she had nobly used the golden opportunities in her cherished charge, to do a work which none could ever undo. In many little ways, the fruit, even then, must have been seen, and the loving confidence of the gentle child amply repaid the nurse's love. As time sped on, the good seed of the word became more manifest in the fruit of the Spirit, whether in the devotion of Lord Ashley in youth, or in the pious activity of his manhood as Lord Shaftesbury, on to the mellow maturity of a ripe old age. That a valuable lesson is here for the godly mother, governess, or nurse! — a soul committed to a woman's care, a service done to a living Saviour, the blessing added that maketh rich, and multitudes are blessed in consequence. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." At the tender age of seven years, the quiet of the nursery in the parental home was exchanged for many an unhappy day in school routine, under a stranger's roof and charge. Taken thus from his best and earliest friend, brought into contact with rough and older boys whose wicked ways he loathed, this young nobleman experienced sorrows in these first days at school, of which children in humbler life know little.

Unhappy at home, the child had always had the comfort of his nursery friend to turn to, but now, away in a cold and chilly moral atmosphere, he was truly friendless, because there were none to meet the full need of his heart in companionship. While these days of misery passed slowly on, the first overwhelming sorrow of his life came upon him, in the death of his beloved nurse. The painful certainty that he would never see her again on earth, added greatly to the discomfort of those bitter school-days.

"All things work together for good to them that love God." These words of holy writ were abundantly verified in Lord Ashley's youth, as well as in the case of many a precious soul on this wide earth. This bereavement was for true soul-blessing, from the heart and hand of One who makes no mistakes. If with his dear old friend he had learned of God by the scriptures she loved, how much more need was there to read them himself, now that he stood alone in his soul's great need! So the boy in his loneliness sought the comfort of the Book she had valued, and the Father who had taken her in love, drew the youthful believer the more to unburden his heart to Him in prayer. Thus early began, through death, the habits of his youth, manhood and old age — the word for counsel, the throne of grace for help in time of need. The trials of school life became

considerably less when young Ashley was removed to Harrow, at the age of twelve, to continue his studies under much more pleasant circumstances, and in a happier home than before. Those years of trouble, between seven and twelve, taught the youthful believer to walk alone in faith. While he greatly missed the brightness which at his age it was natural for him to expect, his soul learned many a deeper lesson such as more cheerful surroundings might never have brought within his reach. The Lord, in His perfect wisdom, was winning the confidence of a young and tender heart, which shrank from a cold unfeeling world, and could confide in none on earth, at the time. The holy habit of referring everything to God, was thus begun in youth, and became the joy and delight of a lifetime. The first distinct bent of the boy's mind towards the voluntary occupations of future years, seems to have been consciously felt, during these school days. A very common circumstance, that of an obscure man being carried to the grave, was the apparently insignificant event which the venerable Lord Shaftesbury spoke of, seventy years afterwards, in the following terms: "God called me to the work, and gave me strength to do it; and I can see now the very spot, and I could almost tell the hour of the day, at which the thought first entered into my mind, when a boy of thirteen or fourteen years of age, at Harrow School."

It was a painful sight to the eye, and equally unpleasant to the ear, which thus met the thoughtful boy in his lonely walk that day, and so far determined the whole course of his life as a man. No special interest in the dead, nor sympathy with the living, animated the youth, but the helplessness of the dust to be consigned to the earth, and the sin of the men who bore it, deeply stirred Lord Ashley's soul, as he looked on in horror. The cold clay within that rude coffin was carried by men so intoxicated as to reel and totter in their steps, while they dropped their lifeless load, and poured forth from their lips language only in keeping with their vile and depraved condition.

Five debased drunkards formed that funeral; none to grieve, none to pity, none to speak of death, eternity and God, in that pitiable group, only a dead body carried by men living in the flesh but wholly dead in trespasses and sins. This revolting scene which attracted the schoolboy's attention on Harrow Hill, and touched his heart with that genuine pity which only God can give, constituted him the only true mourner as he watched the progress of the miserable company. "Can this be permitted," he exclaimed, "simply because the man was poor and friendless?" There and then the desire was formed within the boy, to take his stand beside the needy and the helpless, though years passed over his head before it took shape in practice, when the instrument had been made ready for use by the hand of the divine Master. On leaving Harrow, Lord Ashley was placed under the care of a clergyman for two years, when study was greatly neglected, but a fresh start was given, when he proceeded to Oxford at the age of eighteen. His mind then seems to have expanded to a considerable degree, so that its cultivation was more rapid and steady than before. There, in his student life, the energy and perseverance became manifest which so marked his long career of usefulness to the close. At twenty-one, he gained a first class in classics, and four years afterwards, he took his place in parliament. On the threshold of his life-work we must leave the young Lord Ashley as one who was, ere long, to be known among rich and poor, high and low, possessing a heart which felt for others' woes, and constantly labouring to assuage the sorrows of many. Above all, the seventh earl of Shaftesbury was known by the holy honoured name of Christian, in its truest sense; that is, not only one who took the name of Christ upon him, but one who belonged to Christ, and was seeking to occupy, "till he come."

Nature had many charms for Lord Shaftesbury, for he greatly enjoyed its varied beauties, with a mind simple and appreciative. He saw in creation the hand of the Creator, and loved the workmanship because he loved the living God, and knew him by the tender name of Father. Thoughts were suggested about the coming One, by the blue sky or the clouds of heaven, and a lonely walk afforded occasion for "a silent prayer in solitude and contemplation."

Like every one who seeks to serve "Jesus only," this devoted man knew what it was to practise self-denial. He was of a sensitive nature, and loved retirement, yet he went forth in public in the face of much that touched him keenly, that he might serve rather than rest. He loved the quiet of home, and the society of friends, and valued time for mental enjoyment. Instead of yielding to these tastes, however, Lord Shaftesbury sought to soothe the sorrowful, relieve the needy, encourage the weak, raise the fallen, and befriend the friendless. So to the front he went, with much moral courage, seeking to deny himself that he might benefit his less-favoured fellow-men.

We have seen how large a place prayer had in the varied events of the life whose early impressions we have been recording, though only to a small extent, for there is much in a dependent spirit, that is hidden from the eye of man. It is fostered by feeding upon the word, and he who speaks much to God, cannot fail to delight in what He has written. Of this matter, Lord Shaftesbury expressed himself in the following words: "The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible!" "Amid all the conflicts of the nations coming upon the earth, that Book shall be our life, our light, our security, our pillar of cloud by day, our pillar of fire by night, our guide through all our perils; and none but those who have the Bible in their hearts, will be able to meet the great conflict, and stand in their lot, at the end of the days."

## 7 Present Lessons from Past Labours.

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Present Lessons from Past Labours. Of all the millions of men who have trodden the earth, our minds have been occupied in the preceding pages with only six, and of these, the most insignificant part of their lives has claimed our attention. The child or the boy may pass unnoticed, but when the full development of manhood is reached, it is then the mark of the mind is best seen, for good, or for evil. If boyhood, however, is less prominent, it is a period of life of the greatest importance, for the principles and habits acquired then often follow one through many, many years.

We have seen these six men living for the benefit of others less favoured than they. The whole course of each life was coloured with the object which was so dear to the heart, and everything was looked at in its relation to the one desire which governed the person. This mental purpose was cherished and pursued, from very small beginnings to the final triumph, and a grand and visible success.

Most people would enjoy the achievement of a long cherished desire, but fewer have the moral courage to follow the first faint wish from its occurrence in the mind, to a successful accomplishment in action. One must be content to be led on little by little, through good report and through bad report, by the rough ways where self is denied, or the difficult steps which incur reproach.

William Farel waged war with error, but he did it at the risk of his reputation, and even life itself. Philip Melancthon held the scriptures in such unwonted prominence, that he incurred blame in his student days, and was misjudged even when only carrying a copy. George Whitefield feared not to be accounted mad, if only he could awaken souls to a sense of their danger, and lead them to Christ. Naturally, young Judson seemed fitted to shine in America, but to preach to the heathen, he was willing to hide himself in Burmah, away from the surrounding civilization and enlightenment of his youth. Wilberforce laboured, in the face of much opposition, to influence individuals, till he succeeded in touching the whole British nation with a sense of what was due to God, and the slave as His creature. And lastly, Lord Shaftesbury had to undergo the bitter but necessary training of friendlessness in youth, before as a man he went forth to befriend his fellow-creatures in their helplessness and misery.

Perhaps the young reader of these pages has felt the desire awakened in the soul to live to some good and noble purpose in life. If the opening years of those valuable lives have set before you lessons which are profitable and worthy of attainment, then remember those true and familiar words — "There is no royal road to learning."

Many valuable old maxims were brought before me in the days of my childhood, when my brain was only developing, as that of my young readers may also be, at the present time. These have formed substantial principles in after life, for which I have frequently been thankful, and am still. I was often reminded of the fact, that "a man is known by the company he keeps, and by the books

he reads." This is simply because the mind which controls the movements of the body, instinctively associates itself with that which suits it, whether in living individuals or inanimate books. Tastes and desires are also strengthened or acquired, in the time thus spent, and the mind so engaged.

Boys have generally more time for reading than girls, for the needle occupies the gentle fingers during many moments which the boy can freely spend on his much-loved book. It may be well that it is so, for some girls have a taste for reading of a less solid character than suits the mind of the future man. It is a well-known fact, that what is called light reading tends to unfit one for practical duties, whereas books which give more exercise to the mind than a mere record of frivolities, form thoughts and ways of greater activity and energy.

We are careful as to the kind of nourishment taken into the body, why should we be less particular as to mental food? Scripture says, "Take heed what you hear;" "Take heed therefore how ye hear." Both thoughts teach us the importance of keeping out all one can, that would not be profitable to the soul, which is reached through the body. The formation of the mind depends much on the outward influences brought to bear upon it under God. He can overrule all, and speak to the heart at any period of life, but His own perfect word commands, "Train up a child in the way he should go."

Two well-known rivers, on whose waters I have sailed, rise before me in memory, when I think of how mentally the youthful life is moulded by surroundings of good or evil. The Rhine and the Rhone first see the light of day in the same beautiful country, and only a short distance apart. Like the youthful mind, they begin small, and very little would turn their course in any given way. A stone, a rock, a bank, suffices to give a certain turn or bend to a river, which will shape the direction it takes, till its existence on earth is over. So with your mind, dear young reader! formed, moulded, bent as it is in any particular direction according to the influences brought to bear upon it, how needful then it is that you should shun that which is evil, and choose only what is good! The destiny of the Rhone is the beautiful Mediterranean, therefore turning south, it runs with short and rapid flow through the magnificent country that lies between those sparkling waters and its source. The surroundings are those of a sunny clime, and charming scenery, with a southern warmth ever increasing in the river's onward course. I spent twelve hours one autumn day sailing down to Avignon, and nature seemed most fair and lovely on each side of its broad waters, and as far as the eye could reach. In the hand of God the Creator, the Rhone is useful to man, His creature, but I leave my reader to gather lessons from its course when contrasted with that of its early neighbour in Switzerland. The Rhine, like the Rhone, soon leaves the land of its birth, but while the latter speeds on through sunny France, the former is slowly passing through German territory, and becomes both widely known, and greatly praised. Increasing in width, usefulness, and beauty, it pursues a steady northward course, where the German nation boasts of its greatness, and profits by its presence. On, on, on to the sea, never ceasing, never idling, but in the hands of the Creator a comfort, a blessing, a profit to many, the beautiful river makes haste to begone! Linger not by vine-clad heights, or scenes of human greatness, it leaves alike the busy town, the prosperous village, the stately castle, to seek the cold grey sea in the north, where its waters mingle with the ocean, and finally encircle the earth.

"The ear of the wise seeketh knowledge." So wrote the wise man in his book of Proverbs, as inspired by the Holy Spirit of God. Following out this thought, you and I, dear reader, may gather a

few lessons from the far-famed Rhine, that will help us in life's journey to live for others' good. Infinitely more than a creature of earth, the believer may shine for Christ in the new creation, where "all things are of God."

Begin at the cross, my unsaved reader! that as a needy sinner you may be saved by a loving Saviour, who "died for all" there. Then, as a child of God, by faith in Christ Jesus, let the Holy Ghost lead and guide you, bending your steps on earth as suits his perfect wisdom, and you will leave behind you traces of moral beauty, marvellous because divine. A well-ordered mind should produce a well-spent life, hearing such useful results as will call forth praise from many a heart to God.

Then, beyond the banks of your God-given life, beyond the inhabitants of the places where you have lived, the glorious infinitude of the future lies before you, in all its great and wonderful reality. There in divine perfection and bliss, your spirit, soul, and body, will be for ever occupied with one centre of glory and adoration — God's Son as your Saviour! His Christ as your Lord! His Lamb as your Redeemer! To stimulate the believing youth to holy deeds of love, as he passes on to eternity, the record of these young lives has been written, but for the unsaved boy who remains so, I can only sorrowfully add, that no deeds worth remembering, either great or small, can be done by the soul that continues to be a great sinner, and despises in his neglect, a seeking Saviour!

"In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." — Ecclesiastes 11:3.

"Life is brief — a span, a shadow, Vapour vanishing from sight; Time is short — each moment bearing Mortals, in its rapid flight." Precious soul of God's creation What to thee are time and life? Are they spent for Jesus only? Or with self and folly rife? "Endless, boundless is the future — Full with bliss or woe to thee; See the end of all thy labour — After time, eternity!"

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