WRITINGS OF ANDREW BONAR

by Andrew Bonar

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by Andrew Bonar, compiled for study and devotional reading.

155 Chapters

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01.00. Development of the Antichrist

Development of the Antichrist by Andrew Bonar

Preface

1. The Personality of the Antichrist

2. The Time of His Appearing

3. His Characteristics and Duration

4. His Destruction and Its Consequences

Conclusion

01.000. Preface

Development of Antichrist - Preface The principle of interpreting the prophetic portions of Holy Scripture as literally as the historical is recognized throughout the following pages, and it is upon this ground alone that the writer builds his hope of escaping a charge of presumption in submitting them for consideration, as he has ventured to do. They are meant to be a protest against the confusion which has been introduced by metaphorical indulgences, and not as an additional fancy to increase the bewilderment felt by many who, like himself, are honestly seeking to know the truth of what concerns us all so deeply. The rule laid down is that Scripture language is to be taken literally in every instance where the context does not, clearly and unmistakably, show it to be metaphorical. There surely is nothing unreasonable in such a position, and if there were, it is for those who dispute to prove it so and also to define, with equal distinctness, the principle on which they would proceed, showing, to begin with, why words occurring in one part of Scripture are to bear a different construction from what they do in another.

We have its own authority for saying that in it are things "hard to be understood," and a knowledge of this may well deter any from dogmatizing upon details; but can it be said that this is to interfere with the principle of a literal interpretation itself or the leading deductions which, if words have any meaning at all, follow inevitably from it? Can it really be deliberately believed that God■s Word is so darkly and unintelligibly expressed as to have left the prophetic portion of it an open field for every wild and unbridled speculator to enter upon, or that men may venture to assign to terms occurring there a meaning altogether different from what truth and soberness assign to them elsewhere?

If the great enemy of all truth can no longer bury prophetic truth, as till of late years he has pretty nearly succeeded in doing, it would seem as if his efforts were now directed to deluge the world with false suggestions, so as to bewilder and perplex men■s minds, and it would therefore be well for us to recall, in the deceivableness of our days, how our Lord Himself met the delusions in His. Was it not by a constant and consistent appeal to the inspired literality of Scripture? "It is written," was His answer, and it is to the same refuge His followers must betake themselves, if they would escape the increasing confusion in which the neglect of this great principle is involving prophetic as well as all other Scripture investigation. That prophetic study, in an especial degree, should have been attended with so little practical benefit, might well of itself create a suspicion that the prevailing system has been, and is intrinsically wrong. By it the inquiry has been directed chiefly, as it would seem, to gratify a vain curiosity as to dates, etc. on which it was not to be expected any blessing could rest: nor indeed has it rested nor will rest, until the same consistent principle of fulfillment, recognizable in prophecies declared by Scripture itself to have been already fulfilled, is acted upon in respect to those that are not. But besides all this, let us bear in mind there is something else to be attended to. Our principle may be right, and yet there be no practical benefit to ourselves individually from the study after all. The question is not how much we are interested or how correct our conclusions may be, but how are we profiting by the disclosure we shall find of such terrible, and, at the same time, such glorious realities as the "sure word of prophecy"

declares to be coming upon the earth? Without a corresponding result on our life and conversation, we are but trifling with this as with other Scripture, for all there is bound up in indissoluble harmony together, prophecy as well as doctrine being alike declared to be profitable for our correction and instruction in righteousness (see 2 Timothy 3:16) by the same inspiration which has taught and commanded us to "search the Scriptures," without separating them as we have been doing. The different portions, when so taken, will be found to be all in explanation and support of each other, whilst the comfort given by an assurance of ultimate triumph will indeed be found distinctly helping God■s people into a "patient waiting," as the knowledge imparted will keep them from being "shaken in their minds," if not altogether overborne by those things which, as they will see, are coming upon the earth.

Leamington, November 1852.

Chapter 3

01.01. The Personality of the Antichrist

Development of Antichrist Chapter 1. The Personality of Antichrist

Christians are called to tread nowhere with greater circumspection than when dealing with unfulfilled prophecy, and it is owing to want of due caution here that so many a humble inquirer has been left, amidst the confusion that is within and ridicule without the Church, in painful uncertainty as to what his duty in regard to the prophetic portion of Scripture really is. The things there, "hard to be understood," have been so twisted and perplexed by each enthusiast in pursuit of his own favorite theory of interpretation, as seemingly to have left the whole question of what is fulfilled and what is not, more doubtful and unsettled than ever, and hence with many, a not unnatural doubt has arisen as to whether it might not be better to leave the whole subject alone. But against the propriety of such a decision the natural thought will arise, if no practical benefit was intended for the church from the study, why does what is confessedly prophetical occupy so large a portion of that sacred volume which all are enjoined to "search" (John 5:39), and how comes it that there should be a distinct blessing to him who readeth and understandeth the prophecy of this Book? Why should the example of such an one as Daniel be recorded with approval (Daniel 9:2-3), who set himself by prayer and supplication to understand by books the number of the years? Or that such advantage should be indicated to those of God■s people who give heed to the sure word of prophecy, as of a light shining in a dark place (2 Peter 1:19)? And farther, are we not presented with a tangible proof of such advantage having actually been secured to those, who in faith of prophecies recorded, were waiting for and expecting such events as marked the first coming of the Messiah, and the destruction thereafter of Jerusalem when they should see it "compassed by armies," as they did at the approach of Titus, so escaping in Pella the calamities of that terrible overthrow? Had each recorded prophecy been unquestionably already fulfilled in the church■s past history, there might perhaps have been some excuse for those who stand back from the study. But when confessedly this is not the case, as shown amidst other things by the very discrepancies which exist among interpreters themselves, we cannot escape from a commanded duty unless prepared to forfeit the blessing with which the study of prophecy is distinctly connected.

Again, if that study is to have reference (as some would have it) only to the past, how is it that Scripture itself says concerning it, "ye do well that ye take heed in your hearts as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise"? Surely it cannot be said that this has reference to the past, for even our own senses will lead us, when journeying home in a dark night, to observe the lights before us more anxiously than those we have passed. "Ye do well that ye take heed," is the simple and sufficient reply to those who counsel us, because of the perplexity in which men have involved the subject, to leave it henceforth alone, whilst at the same time the failures of the past ought no less to make us cautious as to how, in future, we allow ourselves to take so many unproved assertions for granted. In prophecies already fulfilled (such as those relating to our Lord■s first advent■the crucifixion, etc.), there is one striking characteristic to which we would do well to attend, as about it there can be no difference of opinion. It is this, that in

whatever way men might previously have been regarding the prediction, and however their fancy might have wandered as to what it might mean, when the fulfillment took place it was distinctly found that Scripture had been speaking literally, as shown by a literal accomplishment. Alas! for the expositors of our day if their declarations are to be tried by that rule. Who among us would, for a moment, place the satisfactory simplicity of past fulfillments on a level with those which we are called to consider as over and gone already, by the easy and fanciful system in fashion now?

It is a dangerous thing to underrate the extent of Satan■s agency in the world, raising as he has ever done from the day of his first perversion and misinterpretation of God■s words in the garden of Eden, mists of delusion and error to distort or conceal what God intended His people should be aware of for their warning as well as for their comfort. He knows well in our day that his time is fast shortening, and he knows too of the increasing power he is to be permitted to exercise in the time of the end (Revelation 12:12; and Revelation 13:2). So whilst the "sure word of prophecy," if given heed to, would have been and still be "a light" shining in the dark passages through which the course of events is leading, his efforts have been constantly and successfully directed to darken and perplex the future, by hiding the simplicity of the truth under fanciful coverings, and so leading even God■s people to be looking in wrong directions, that, if possible, they may be deceived or overthrown, even as His ancient people themselves were, when the issue itself is really at hand. The idea of a personal literal Antichrist is what he seems especially to have sought to render ridiculous, or rather, to banish altogether, in these days which to all appearance so closely precede his being revealed: and yet if such an embodiment of evil (as it is desired to show) is really to be, to what ought the attention of the church be directed more seriously than to this? The fanciful and metaphorical interpreters already referred to, have worked hard to make the pope or the papacy (it is difficult sometimes to know which) answer the description given in Scripture of the man of sin when he is seen. Some plausibility has been given to their attempts by the occurrence of certain points of resemblance, for all forms of error and evil will be found summed up in the embodiment which is to be at the end, "when the transgressors are come to the full" (Daniel 8:23). But the great and distinguishing marks themselves are not, and will not be seen till he who is to carry them all is revealed.

One of these has been specially defined by inspiration, "he is Antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son" (1 John 2:22), which it is vain to say that either the pope or the papacy have ever done. On the contrary it is sufficiently evident to any one who is not determined to deny it at all hazards, that their whole strength to deceive and rule as they have done, has rested on the (wicked and unfounded) assumption that the pope is the vicar of God upon earth. His bulls have accordingly been issued in the name of the Holy Trinity, which so far from denying, he claims to represent.

If he is worshipped, as asserted, it is simply and undeniably by those who believe him to be what he pretends he is, the authorized representative of the God Whom both they and their pope himself profess to worship. Is this not manifest when, at his death, like the meanest of his followers, he has to be prayed out of purgatory to fit him to appear in the presence of Him Whose representative he was held to have been on earth, where nevertheless he had personally been contracting sin like others? So far from denying either the Father or the Son, each pope in succession has professed to derive expressly from Them the usurped authority so fearlessly and fearfully exercised.

Again, if the pope or the papacy be the beast, as maintained by that class of expositors, according to Revelation 13:8, all must be worshipping him whose names are not written from the foundation of the world in the book of the Lamb slain. In other words, Antichristianism in that case, would simply be limited to those who adhere to the pope, with the unavoidable conclusion that such professed atheists as Hume, Gibbon, and Thomas Paine, who showed as little faith in his as in any other name, were written in the book of that adorable Redeemer Whom nevertheless they blasphemed!

Moreover, if the pope is the beast, as it is pretended he is, and all the world wondering after him, his followers to accord with Scripture (Revelation 13:3-4) must be, without mistake worshipping the dragon (who is elsewhere declared to be the devil Revelation 20:2) as giving to him the power he possesses. But surely, however misled we may think them to be, none among us will venture to affirm that either as a community or individually, papists do this, which would evidently imply a state of hopeless reprobation.*

*(1 Corinthians 10:1-33, showing that where idols are worshipped devils are, is not overlooked. All we mean to assert is, that fearful as the delusions of the papacy as a system are, papists individually cannot be said to worship the devil, as men in the end will avowedly do under Antichrist, to whom they see him giving his power and authority■ Revelation 13:4). To escape from such a conclusion, all that can be said must resolve itself into this, that the precise language of Scripture referred to does not mean what it says, for there is not even a place for repentance left to them inasmuch as it is written, "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented" for ever and ever (Revelation 14:9-10).

It must not, however, be imagined that there is with all this, the slightest intention here of insinuating anything in favour of the pope and his false and impious pretensions. From the days of the apostles there have been "many antichrists" in the world, as we learn from one of the very passages which tells us (1 John 2:18) that "The Antichrist shall come." And among these the pope and the papacy must take their place, not only as forbidding men, in opposition to God■s command, to "search the Scriptures," which testify of Christ (John 5:39), but as having introduced doctrines and commandments which are contrary to His honor and subversive of His alone mediation as well as sufficiency for the sin of the whole world. To lift a man in one way or other into the place and honor which Christ alone should possess, is the grand aim of antichristianism in all its different states and degrees. A family likeness is therefore to be traced through them all, to be more strongly marked, perhaps, in the last days, which are so strikingly referred to in 2 Timothy 3:1-13, when evil men and seducers are to wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived, and when as we learn elsewhere (Daniel 8:23-25), transgressors having come to the full, "a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power;* and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace (prosperity) shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes."

*(It is hoped as we proceed to be able to show that the king here spoken of is identical with the beast who acts "not in his own power" but by that of the devil, whom all the world worships, as giving "power to the beast" (Revelation 17:13), that identity being proved by there being one act, one era, and one destruction common to these among the other names which are given to the Antichrist as characteristic of him.) The personality of the Antichrist here contended for is no speculative theory to be adopted or rejected as suits our own fancy and about which each may form his own opinion. A very slight examination, particularly of the original, will show that so strongly is that personality declared, as to leave it as little optional with us to overlook it, as it is to deny that of the devil who will give him his great power and authority. It was evidently the belief of the early church, whilst the passages in Scripture which speak of him, if honestly taken, distinctly show that none else than a person can be meant.

He is called (and if any will examine the original, they will see how markedly it is there expressed), "that man of sin, . . . the son of perdition" who "sitteth in the temple of God"* (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4), the wicked or lawless one (2 Thessalonians 2:8), "the Antichrist" (above the many who will have preceded him) (1 John 2:18 and 1 John 2:22), "a king" and "the king" (Daniel 8:23 and Daniel 11:36), who does "according to his will," "the idol shepherd" who tears the flesh (Zechariah 11:17), he who is to open "his mouth in blasphemy against God" (Revelation 13:6), and who is to be "cast alive into the lake of fire" (Revelation 19:20).

*("The temple of God" is an expression applied in Scripture to three things, and three only. (1) to the actual temple at Jerusalem, as in 2 Chronicles 35:20. (2) to the bodies of individual saints, as in 1 Corinthians 6:19. (3) to the Church of God, as in 1 Corinthians 3:17. Now it is manifestly impossible that Antichrist could "sit" in any but the first of these three, and the coinciding mark given by Daniel of the "glorious holy mountain" [Mount Zion being alone called so], where he is to plant himself, confirms it to be a fact which can have no accomplishment at Rome [as alleged], inasmuch as neither the temple nor mountain are or ever have been there, any more than they can be elsewhere than at Jerusalem■ the holy city. Is it not strange to see Protestants so bent on their fancy of the pope being Antichrist, as not to perceive they give up the whole question by calling St Peter■s at Rome "the temple of God"? For if the pope is the Antichrist, how can they call his temple at Rome or anywhere else "the temple of God," when the exception, as we have seen, is only as to Jerusalem, where alone, of necessity, the usurpation in any circumstances could be, "in the holy place,"■ "My holy hill of Zion")?

Under other names which as remarked already will be found applicable to him only, his personality is as distinctly intimated on every occasion, and yet to suit preconceived notions and prejudices, terms nowhere else so interpreted are distorted to mean a "succession of men," or as others would have it, a "succession of principles," which are gradually to be consumed out of it as the world becomes converted. Why in the same way might not the third Person of the ever blessed Trinity be held to mean merely a succession of influences or governing principles? How is it that Christians will not open their eyes to the danger of sanctioning what would make plain words of Scripture mean anything or nothing, and so give the enemy ground for questioning even the Personality of the Lord Who bought them, or else the alternative of hearing themselves taunted with inconsistency? In addition to this greater danger to our holy religion itself, there is another springing from such loose interpretation of Scripture which is, that by suffering ourselves to be led into the hope of amelioration which is gradually to usher in the day of the Lord, we may mistake

the "deceivableness of unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:10) with which we are warned Antichrist will introduce himself, for the beginning of that reign of righteousness which will be established only when Christ "with the spirit of His mouth and . . . with the brightness of His coming" shall have destroyed and consumed him (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

It will be found in that day to have been no light matter to have been trifling with Scripture language, our tendency being to call evil good and good evil; while all Satan■s art will be turned to conceal the real tendency as well as nature of his working from us. "That old serpent, which is the devil" (Revelation 20:2), will at the end as at the beginning, still prove himself more subtle than any beast of the field. His "working" will be in no shape to alarm the fears or shock men with its impropriety. On the contrary, it will be suited to the spirit and requirements of the age, with a flexibility and power of insertion best resembled to the form which he assumed when tempting Eve in the garden. The gradual character of his approaches should rouse us to think, for "many antichrists" have been preparing the way for him ever since the apostle declared in his day that "the spirit of Antichrist" was already in the world (1 John 4:3). The full development will surely follow when the apostasy and man of sin come to be. Meanwhile each successive step downwards seems in itself so trifling as scarcely to deserve our notice, which is in fact the danger. "Behold, I have told you before" (Matthew 24:25) is the caution given immediately after our Lord Himself had been warning of the especial deceivableness of the times which shall immediately precede His coming, when will be seen how vain and unwarranted was the fond conceit with which men had been pleasing themselves of any peaceful termination of present evil, which on the contrary, if we will but listen to Scripture, must "wax worse and worse" (2 Timothy 3:13) until the consummation takes place under the Antichrist, emphatically called as presiding over it, "that man of sin," in a trouble "such as was not from the beginning (foundation) of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21).

Regarding that last tribulation, it seems God■s merciful design to have His church and people specially warned, so that it should not overtake them unawares any more than the day of the Lord which it is to precede, though both shall come as a snare upon all them that dwell on the face of the earth. Only admit the possibility of a future personal Antichrist (which, surely, it is not unreasonable to ask, after the Scripture terms that have been cited), and our Bibles will be found replete with allusions to such a being in this dispensation, with marks to distinguish him when he does come, from all that will have preceded him. Is it objected that so evident a sign as he would be before the coming of Christ, would interfere with the injunction to "Watch, for ye know not the day nor the hour when your Lord cometh;" and to that extent to put off the expectant and pilgrim character which befits those servants who profess to be waiting for their Lord? Hear the answer which such a passage as 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17 supplies. In it we have the church warned not to be shaken "as that the day of Christ is at hand," whilst the very same apostle who gives the warning, had just been telling them to "watch and be sober" (1 Thessalonians 5:6), for the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night, ■ nay, what is more, a distinct intimation is given that that day should not come until the man of sin■this "son of perdition"■ should be revealed. The only seeming confusion arises from our overlooking the broad distinction drawn in the same epistle, between the children of darkness and the children of light (1 Thessalonians 5:4-5) ■the one to be overtaken as by a thief in the night, the other to "know perfectly" the times and the seasons, inasmuch as "I told you these things" (2 Thessalonians 2:5).

Indeed, signs of the most definite character have been constantly vouchsafed to God■s people in all ages, as now, to designate the advent of events previously foretold by His prophets. Yet these, though sufficiently distinct for their warning, are invariably seen to have been overlooked by all others. Noah■s preaching, whilst the ark was preparing, did not alarm the scoffers of his day, or make them know "till the flood came and took them all away." And so with the scoffers in our own (2 Peter 3:3), will the coming of the Son of man be, although preceded by so signal an event as the revelation of the man of sin: a sign, nevertheless, to the children of light, for which already they would do well to be watching. To be "seeking" a sign is a widely different thing from looking out for one already announced for warning. The sin and perverseness of seeking a sign is pointed out to us in such passages as Matthew 12:39 and Mark 8:11-12. To that evil and adulterous generation■children of darkness, and not of light, according to the distinction drawn in the epistle to the Thessalonians already referred to■no sign shall be given. And why? Because of their willful rejection of the signs God Himself had been pleased to vouchsafe. And mark the consequence when the false christs and false prophets appear, as appear they will (Mark 13:22), with signs and wonders to seduce if possible, the very elect though waiting for them. Not only shall no sign be given to the despisers of Scripture warning, but God shall send them strong delusion to believe "the lie," that they all may be damned who believed not "the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12). How fearful the thought even of such a delusion! More fatal still than that in the days of Noah; for it is the delusion of him whose coming is to be after the working of Satan, and their end, like his, to be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever (Revelation 19:20; Revelation 20:10).

If there be any truth in these remarks, enough, surely, has already been said to vindicate, in some degree to Christians at least, the uses as well as duty of prophetic study, whatever ridicule may be attaching to it. A study in which it will scarcely be possible to engage without, ere long, being forced to see that a personal "coming of the Lord" is to be undoubtedly expected, if words are to have any meaning at all, as well as a time of unequalled tribulation immediately to precede it (Matthew 24:29). And equally impossible will it be found to separate that tribulation from a personal Antichrist and the leading part he has in it, as the express agent for the putting forth of Satan■s energy to accomplish what God will then permit him to do. The apostle speaks, as has already been adverted to, of antichrists in his day, but the maturity of antichristian evil (every departure from the truth in Jesus being held as antichristian) is distinctly postponed till "that man of sin be revealed" ■the lawless one who, after a permitted triumph, is to be destroyed by the "brightness of His coming."

It has been already noticed incidentally, that the notion of a personal literal Antichrist with a short-lived supremacy, was held by the early Christians, without, it is believed, any recorded exception. They were living too close to the times in which a strictly literal fulfillment had been seen of all the prophecies connected with our Lord■s first coming in the flesh, to doubt that "the man of sin" in his times, would prove to be also literally a man, or the 1260 days of his usurpation literal days. It was reserved for a later generation, who had fallen under the cruelties of papal oppression, to fancy it to be the unequalled trouble and predicted apostasy of the last times, and even to alter the literal meaning of words to make it so.

It was about the year 1240, that Eberhard began to think the pope to be the "little horn," and that Luther and his companions in tribulation should have gone in with such imagination, seems far

less wonderful than that so many in these days should still be arguing that he is the dreaded "man of sin," when the oppression and troubles Luther saw have long since ceased. The cessation alone ought to have proved to any not willfully blind, that the pope cannot be that man of sin under whom the tribulation is to be; for it is to be terminated, not as some would have it by the gradual decline of either the pope or the papacy, but by the coming of the Lord Himself to destroy the wicked one.

"Immediately (the word in the original is emphatic) after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth (land) mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:29-30).

Those who adhere to the prevailing mode of figurative interpretation, regard all this as metaphorical language, maintaining that the sun and moon here mentioned, are political emblems. Thus they dispose of these solemn predictions of our Lord Himself, even when forced to admit that the same expressions in Scripture, when employed to describe past events, as at the crucifixion, did express what actually occurred and took place then and there. If the sun was darkened and the veil rent (Luke 23:45), surely it is worse than presumptuous to affirm that the same words applied to the future may have a totally different meaning.

"Yet once more (again),* I shake not the earth only, but also heaven," are the words of inspiration (Hebrews 12:26), and by the terms applicable alone to the same mighty occurrence foretold by our Lord Himself in the passage just transcribed from Matthew, which again can of necessity be none other than that "coming" by which He destroys Antichrist■ that "man of sin," whom He will encounter, not in decrepitude like the pope, but whilst he is still aided by the devil "with all power, and signs, and lying wonders," and then fully manifested to be the lawless one opposing and exalting himself above all (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

*(This "once again" is alluded to in Isaiah 2:1-22, "when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth" (Isaiah 2:21) which is distinctly to be, as the context will show in "the day of the LORD" (Isaiah 2:12) when every one that is lifted up (like Antichrist exalting himself) "shall be brought low").

If Christ then destroys the "man of sin" at His coming, the destruction must take place "immediately" after the tribulation described to be "such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21). This being so, the time spoken of must be identical with that of Daniel 12:1 and the events there recorded, inasmuch as there cannot be two distinct periods of unequalled tribulation; and this again identifies the king there described as exalting himself above every god and coming to his end and none to help him (Daniel 11:45), with "that man of sin" (2 Thessalonians 2:1-17) "the son of perdition" who is destroyed by "the brightness of His coming." But who can pretend that there is any resemblance between such a desolation with such a destruction, and a pope powerless to do even what his predecessors did; nay, requiring the support of foreign troops to retain him on his feeble throne? Does it not appear something like mockery to say of such an one that the devil is giving him his power and great authority? Are men worshipping him and saying, "Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" (Revelation 13:4). Where are the ten kings who "receive power as kings one hour" with him, and who are said to have one mind, and agree to give him their power till the purposes of

God are fulfilled (Revelation 17:12-13, Revelation 17:17)?

They who call the pope the Antichrist admit he is also the beast, and yet can talk to us of the gradual diminution or drying up of his power, in face of what is written in Revelation 17:1-18, where, with the kings of the earth, he is seen in the plenitude of his power (and from what follows aided to the last by the devil), gathered to make war against Him that sat on the horse and against His army. Is it possible to think that the downfall there recorded is a gradual one? Every word in Revelation 19:20 indicates the reverse. It is sudden as it is overwhelming, for then is seen the strength of Christ, the "seed of the woman," put forth against him who is the seed of the serpent; the "head" bruised then as the "heel" has already been.

It is the strength of heaven against the strength of hell, and the catastrophe is complete. "The beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse" (Revelation 19:20-21).

Such is the end, not of the pope or the papacy, but of an apostasy more terrible than all that has yet darkened this sin-worn earth. It is the recorded downfall of Gentile power then in unholy combination with Jewish, which alike cast off Christ as the rightful Lord, will have chosen a king of their own to the rejection of Him Who is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. And it is thus that his Name is seen written on His vesture and on His thigh (Revelation 19:16), as followed by the armies of heaven, He comes to claim His kingdom from the usurper.

How strange to see Christians willing, by figurative perversions like these, to set aside the glorious open triumph which will then be seen, and in which they themselves are to share, for an inconsistent attempt to make the pope in the decrepitude of these last times, personate him who aided by the devil and supported to the end, as we have seen, by the kings of the earth and their armies, encounters the armies of heaven and falls by the power of a Mighty One.

People tell us that although it may be different with him at this epoch from what it once was, the pope is reviving or will yet revive, and his efforts to recover his lost authority be yet successful. But this is indulging a mere fancy, for which there is not only no warrant in Scripture, but the reverse. The Antichrist, when he is seen, comes "in like a flood" (Isaiah 59:19) and prospers (Daniel 8:12) without intermission, and this continuance is also characteristic of the adherence given by the kings of the earth and their armies, till they share his destruction.

There are other arguments, besides these which have been already produced, to show that the Antichrist when he does appear, will prove to be neither a succession of men nor a succession of principles, but what Scripture language, in its ordinary acceptation which we have no right to reject, tells us throughout he will be■an individual man. It is somewhat unfortunate that the definite article, which appears in the original, has been omitted in our translation of 1 John 2:18. It ought to run, Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that the Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists already in the world, whereby we know that it is the last time. The many antichrists are thus forerunners of the Antichrist himself, and must of necessity therefore exhibit in some degree his characteristics; not the least remarkable of which (as attempted to be shown) are his personality, and also his rising out of an apostasy. In fact, many individuals have actually, from

time to time, presented themselves to the notice of the world answering in various particulars the description we have of him in Daniel 11:36-40 and Revelation 13:5-8.

One of the most remarkable of these, to begin with, was Antiochus Epiphanes about 160 years before Christ, whose history is given by Josephus and also in the first chapter of the uninspired book of Maccabees, which although apocryphal, is of good repute as a history, and as such, respected by the Jews themselves.

Antiochus was the savage persecutor of the Jews in their latter times, as the Antichrist himself will be of both Jews and Christians, when, at the end, transgressors shall have come to the full. He followed or rather rose out of an apostasy then, as the Antichrist will be revealed out of the still more fearful "falling away" of which Paul speaks in 2 Thessalonians. A few extracts from the chapter of Maccabees referred to will show this, and help to give us some idea from what he did, of what the Antichrist himself will do in his times.

"In those days went there out of Israel wicked men who persuaded many, saying, Let us go and make a covenant with the heathen that are round about us: for since we departed from them we have had much sorrow. So this device pleased them well. Then certain of the people were so forward herein that they went to the king who gave them license to do after the manner of the heathen. Whereupon they built a place of exercise at Jerusalem according to the custom of the heathen; and made themselves uncircumcised and forsook the holy covenant, and joined themselves to the heathen."

Such is the account of that early apostasy, which may foreshadow more closely than many may be prepared to think, the "falling away" spoken of in Thessalonians. Following upon it, the enemy of the truth in that day appears as we go on to see, "after that Antiochus had smitten Egypt," (mark how Antichrist in his day will do the same, Daniel 11:42-45), "he returned again and went up against Israel and Jerusalem with a great multitude, and took away the golden altar and the candlestick of light and all the vessels thereof, and the table of the shewbread and the pouring vessels and the vials and the censers of gold and the veils and the crowns and the golden ornaments that were before the temple, all of which he pulled off, and when he had taken all away he went into his own land, having made a great massacre and spoken very proudly."

Moreover, we are told, "King Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom that all should be one people and every one should leave his laws; so all the heathen agreed according to the commandment of the king; yea, many of the Israelites consented to his religion and sacrificed unto idols and profaned the Sabbath." Thereafter we find him doing what the Antichrist will yet do still more markedly in his day (Revelation 13:15-18), condemning all to be put to death who refused to "profane the Sabbath and pollute the sanctuary and the holy people, and to set up altars and groves of idols and sacrifice swine■s flesh."

Then comes the identical expression quoted by our Lord from Daniel 168 years after Antiochus, showing his allusion was to something still future: "In the month Casleu he set up the abomination of desolation on the altar, and builded idol altars throughout the cities of Judah. And when they had rent in pieces the books of the law which they found, they burnt them with fire. Howbeit many in Israel were fully resolved not to eat any unclean thing, and there was great wrath upon Israel."

Here we have one of the many antichrists whose doings wonderfully foreshadow what we read of the yet more terrible actings of him, to whom the devil will give his power and great authority; and who opens "his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His Name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven;" and to whom it is given "to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power . . . over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations," and whom all shall worship that dwell upon the earth whose names are not written from the foundation of the world in the book of the Lamb slain (Revelation 13:6-8).

Another individual Antichrist out of the many, was the apostate emperor Julian who tried to overthrow the church and bring back paganism. He too, like Antiochus, followed upon an apostasy (the Arian) which denied that Christ was God. (The Antichrist when he comes will do still more than this, for he will deny "the Father and the Son, exalting himself above all that is called God or is worshipped"). So grievous were his times, as history informs us, that the few devout and holy men who in them were testifying to the truth amidst abounding impiety, thought that Antichrist himself had come when Julian, his shadow, arose.

Another apostasy, which began by placing the traditions of man on a footing with the written word of God, introducing the worship of saints and images and assigning to the Virgin Mary an intercessory power, which holds back from the laity the Bible in which such things are forbidden, teaching, too, contrary to its requirements, a belief in purgatory, transubstantiation, justification by works, and such like doctrines of devils, has also been seen, with a person arising out of it too who claimed for himself and his successors, in the usurped place the popes have so long held, such power and authority as to entitle them to a place among the many antichrists that are in "the world." The next great heresy which arose, the Nestorian, denied Christ■s incarnation, and spreading widely in the lands round Palestine, succeeded in destroying the churches which had so long flourished there. It was out of that remarkable "falling away" that another personal Antichrist arose, Mohammed, who, denying the Son altogether, proclaimed that there was but one God and that he was his prophet. It is well known how successful he has been with many of the Jews themselves in the East. In France, before the revolution, another well-known "falling away" occurred, following upon the doctrines taught by Voltaire, etc., when a national decree was passed that death was a perpetual sleep. The scenes which followed show us what man will dare to do if left to himself, and also called forth another individual who came in like a flood and prospered. In many particulars Napoleon Bonaparte, like his predecessors, showed the features of the Antichrist, flattering at first the system he found prevailing, whilst using it all the while to establish himself in power. In France accordingly he was a Roman Catholic, and in Egypt a worshipper of Mohammed, till finding himself, as by and bye Antichrist will do, fairly established, he dropped the deception under which he had entered, proclaiming himself the monarch and only source of authority. "La France! c■est moi," was the laconic way in which he announced it.

What the successor to his name and authority now appearing may be raised up to accomplish is yet to be seen, but already the tendency is clearly towards a still more extensive development of the clay-iron principle of government which is to prevail in both feet of the Image, before the ten toes of it are developed.

These instances should cause us to ponder well, when we read of a still future and more fearful "falling away" which, to distinguish it from others, in the original styled emphatically "the apostasy"

(2 Thessalonians 2:3), with the revealing after or out of it of that man of sin, the son of perdition, who will oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped: so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Why should we, in the face of such express language and with examples before us of bygone antichrists, still refuse to believe that the Antichrist who shall come (1 John 2:18) will be a person also? The Saviour Whom he will try to counterfeit as well as supplant, appeared in a literal as well as a mystical body. And Antichrist will not want his either. All who practice, encourage, or support corruptions, are properly of Antichrist■s mystical body, exhibiting his spirit which is already working in the children of disobedience; and when the number, perhaps a determined one, is filled up, they will be manifested as displaying the genuine fruits of complete apostasy from the truth which is in Jesus; when transgressors are come to the full under a personal Antichrist, even as Christ■s Church, which is His mystical body (Colossians 1:24), will appear under Him when the fullness of time has come and its numbers complete. So that as the perfection of truth is manifested in Him and His body the Church, the perfection of error will be seen in the other also■the one the Church of the Living God, the other the synagogue of Satan.

If Antichrist is to be then a person, surely it becomes us to inquire what manner of man he will be, especially when told that his coming is with all signs and lying wonders, and also with such deceivableness of unrighteousness, as if possible to deceive the very elect. Are there no tokens already of some such gathering apostasy and deceivableness, along with an increasing conviction among those who think at all, that the signs of the last days are fast gathering around us? Is there not a visible attempt by the men who fancy themselves more advanced and free than their neighbors from what is called bigotry, to make expediency instead of Bible truth the rule of state measures and enactments of law? ■to shape their course as if true "catholicity" consisted in letting each man think for himself, and numbers, not Scripture, decide the course to be taken, so leaving us to believe that the many will be right and the few wrong? Nay, is it not beginning to be even openly avowed that religion has nothing to do with the guidance of a nation, and that the less we say on so sacred a subject the better, seeing it is merely a matter for each man■s conscience? Do we not notice already the fruits of such views in the attempt to have education apart from religion altogether lest someone■s prejudices should be hurt or interfered with? To let the greatest questions be decided by expediency, or (what is nearly the same thing) the wisdom of the majorities, with a sneer at every attempt to appeal to Scripture for guidance? To frame laws by which the Roman Catholic may legislate and hold office in our Protestant community, and the Jew, too, sit in our parliaments, care having been taken that his conscientious belief of our Saviour being an impostor should meet with nothing to offend it on entering there? Is it not plain to the humblest capacity, that there is on all hands a growing inclination with a cunning sort of decency however in the way of doing it, to supersede religion altogether as far as it is external and objective, and to confine it to inward feeling, which again it is thought hypocritical or sanctimonious to allude to in the affairs of life?

All this is grief enough surely to the Christian, but what an addition is made to it when the express language of Scripture is so questioned and criticized as at present, not by its foes alone but by professed friends, and when metaphorical interpretations are given by them of its plainest warnings against all such increasing evil! Give way, as we have been and are doing, to such a system, and what is there to prevent men coming ere long to think that Scripture may have a

hundred different meanings, all equally good, and its teaching mean anything or nothing, as people choose to make it?

Alas for us if that "sure word of prophecy" is obscured, as is the tendency in these days of intellect and energy, whilst the heart of man, amidst all refinement, remains, as it was, "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Let us remember that there is to be a "deceivableness of unrighteousness" in the times of the end, under which Satan will hide his poison and his purposes. Do you think he will be so unskillful in his craft as to ask any one openly and plainly to join him in his crusade against truth? No! he can bait his snare with what has all the appearance of good, if we look at it simply with our own eyes which are evil.

He is even now promising to the nations a coming millennium of civil and religious liberty, when every one is to be sitting under his own vine and fig tree. He is promising equality. He is promising trade and wealth, remission of taxes, and reform of all kinds, and every one happy at last in his own creed, whatever it may be, and in his own way of deciding what is best for himself. Meanwhile he is tempting men to rail against their rulers and superiors as hindrances to this development, whilst he turns their heads with talk of philosophy, and science, and knowledge, and enlargement of mind. The times gone by are only to be scoffed at, and the ways and wisdom of their ancestors a fair subject of merriment. He bids men "mount aloft," and shows them how they may be "as gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5). By and bye too he will provide for them a king whose coming will be after his own working, "with all power, and signs, and lying wonders." He will be "the prince of this world" of whom our Lord spoke as having "nothing in Me" (John 14:30), but one fitted to be a "king over all the children of pride" (Job 41:34), and whose eyelids will be "like the eyelids of the morning" (Job 41:18)■that true Morning which will rise upon his destruction (Isaiah 17:14). But who, in the fancy that has taken possession of so many that the great tribulation is "past already," and that amelioration is now the happy tendency of things, will believe or even listen for a passing moment to those who would spoil their dream by showing forth the plainest declarations in Scripture to the contrary? Such men are esteemed to be beside themselves and deserving at best but of quiet compassion. Their words seem as idle tales and not worth listening to, whilst in their appeals to Scripture they are answered by metaphorical explanations of words which are nowhere else so construed.

Such is the reception they meet in general from within the Church, whilst, without, the confusion is becoming worse confounded. "God is not in all their thoughts," if in any. It seems small concern to the multitude that the world is in opposition to its Maker, His Son rejected and despised and His Holy Spirit grieved, with thousands hurrying on to destruction, and (if Scripture be true) the day of the Lord at hand. How little is there of the mind of Him Who, though He had no sin to weep for in Himself, yet made Himself a man of sorrows for others, and wept over the city that was about to crucify Him. But what has the world, with all the misery that is in it, to do with sorrow or looking for the things that are coming on the earth? They "lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall." They "chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David;" they "drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph" (Amos 6:4-6). This is not for want of warning, but because it is either misread or despised altogether. The world is of a truth sitting in darkness, so gross, that although the light shineth in the darkness, the darkness comprehendeth it not.

Such is the description which inspiration gives, whatever the world may think of its justice in the abundant self-complacency with which every thing human and divine is now canvassed. And it would have been for the Church, compactly knit together, to have been continuing the protest against all such delusion and error, by reflecting, in the darkness around her, the light and spirit derived from her risen and exalted Head, Who Himself in the days of His flesh also bore witness to the same. But, alas! how is the very name being brought into disrepute and contempt among us, by the large and influential class who in the dread of what they call schism, are turning to the stocks and stones of Rome itself rather than let go their unscriptural conceit of what the Church■s unity should be.

It is most true, for the sure word of prophecy declares it, that the Church is to be manifested as one, a visible unity, one fold and one shepherd. But surely they who are living in the certain hope of seeing that blessed consummation, need not be surprised at there being counterfeits in this as in meaner things, and still less be in any danger of being beguiled by the man-millinery (as it has been not inaptly called) of such a thing as Tractarianism, into thinking its childish imitation and mimicry of what is to be, any realization of it. In spite of all the overbearing clamor about apostolic succession, how is it possible for men, capable of reflecting at all, to believe priests and things to be what they visibly are not? Or, to make them think that rood screens and surplices are introducing, if not constituting, the unity which God■s people are panting to see? Where are they to find in Scripture any value attached to such outside unity as this, when the Christian unity of the inner service■the only bond recognized there■is, as in this instance, broken by a Pharisaism which will have nothing to do with others who, although loving the Lord Jesus in sincerity and seen to be walking in His ways, may nevertheless be unable to yield implicit submission to what such masters in Israel pronounce to be "the church," any more than to what councils have decided in bygone times, when men were as fallible as they are now? Is it not manifest, to the overturning of all such pretensions, that amidst His own chosen priesthood even in His own Temple at Jerusalem where His presence had been seen in the cloud which filled it, a period arrived when its oblations and assemblies became an abomination in God■s sight? "Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hateth; they are a trouble unto Me; I am weary to bear them. Who hath required this at your hand to tread My courts?" (Isaiah 1:14, Isaiah 1:12). And further, was it not when that Temple, which had itself been built by Divine command, was still standing in all its completeness of ornament and observance, that the prophet in vision saw the glory of the LORD depart from off the threshold of the house (Ezekiel 10:18), which house thereafter our Lord Himself declared to be "a den of thieves"? What becomes, after such a warning, of the superstitious veneration now reviving for stoles and consecrated chancels, and when to the last of His sojourn on earth, nothing was said of either priesthood or building but that both should be overthrown as they are this day?

Then again, when the promised descent of the Holy Ghost took place, did not the sound as it were of a mighty rushing wind sweep, as it might seem in scorn, past the antiquated walls where once the presence of Deity had visibly been seen, and within which the "vain oblation" was still offered up by priests as properly accounted as before, to rest in that "upper room, where abode" a humble band "with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and His brethren" (Acts 1:14)? Would that the Spirit which thereafter animated these holy men were seen as visibly resting on the multitude of priests who claim succession from them! Of this we may be assured, that where it is wanting in the individual no mere imposition of hands will

avail, even if the form could be proved to have been complied with more satisfactorily than it has yet been, or can be.

O! when will men learn that it is the want of the "Spirit of Christ" among His professed followers which constitutes the schism from Him and from each other so deeply to be deplored by us all, and how vain is the attempt to find, as Rome thinks she has done, a substitute for it in the unity of a complacent ritual, however perfect in its way?

01.02. The Time of His Appearing

Development of Antichrist Chapter 2. The Time of His Appearing

Reference has been made to the declaration in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17 that the day of Christ should not come until "the apostasy" as well as "the man of sin" had been seen. Also to Matthew 24:1-51, where the great tribulation, "such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be," is also to precede the same glorious event. It is evident from these passages that the man of sin who is to exalt "himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped," must be the principal person in the tribulation which "immediately" (mark the importance of the expression, Matthew 24:29), precedes the "coming" by which he is destroyed. His times also have been identified already with those of the tribulation spoken of in Daniel 12:1, inasmuch as there cannot be two unequalled tribulations any more than two second comings. It is equally evident that after the advent of Messiah in humiliation, only one abomination of desolation is spoken of, as shown by the use of the definite article (Matthew 24:15). The reference there made by our Lord is to Daniel 9:27 in connection with what had before been mentioned in Daniel 8:1-27, and afterwards referred to in chapter Daniel 12:11.

These passages, as will be noticed, are all distinctly connected with the king, the Antichrist, who obviously is the principal character in them, for he is seen exalted above all that is named. Still more to show that the abomination is of necessity yet future, let it be borne in mind that there has been neither city nor sanctuary to pollute since Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus in the year A.D.70. And that it could not have happened before is manifest, for Revelation, which agrees with Daniel in the description of the times of the beast and in which there is distinct reference to the abomination as well as the tribulation, was not written for twenty years after the destruction of Jerusalem had occurred.

Again, as fixing the chronology of these events to a period yet future, the destroying king of fierce countenance (Daniel 8:23) is said to come "in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full," (can any one pretend to say in our downward career we have yet seen the full account of transgressors?) and to "stand up against the Prince of princes" to "be broken without hand," which again can mean nothing but the second coming of Christ, the "Stone . . . cut out without hands" (Daniel 2:34). Another remarkable sign fixing all these events, so connected with each other, to the very last days, is given by our Lord Himself in Matthew 24:14, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

It will be noticed on reference to the chapter that this is seen before the tribulation of which we have been speaking, and consequently also before the man of sin who appears in it. If so, he must be, as we have all along been contending, future, for no one will say that the gospel has been ever so preached until now, if it can even yet be said. Still it is evident that sign is drawing near enough to make all of us think how close at hand its full accomplishment may be, when the apostasy, the man of sin, the great tribulation, and the Son of man in the clouds of heaven will all, as it appears,

follow in rapid succession.

Again, we are told (Daniel 7:24) that "the ten horns out of this kingdom (the fourth or Roman empire) are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them," etc. The ten kingdoms must therefore have appeared before Antichrist, inasmuch as he rises after them. This accords with what is said in Revelation 17:12, where the ten horns are again spoken of as "ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast," who, as we have seen, rises after them.

Now let us mark what is said of these kings (Revelation 17:13), "these have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast," for (Revelation 17:17), "God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." Is it possible for anyone to say that ten such kingdoms are in existence now in the Roman earth, each giving their kingdom to the beast? If not, these kingdoms must of necessity be future, for begin when they may, they "agree," and give their kingdom unto the beast until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And what are these "words of God"? "I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet . . . These both were cast alive into a lake of fire" (Revelation 19:19-20).

Thus they are agreed until the purposes are fulfilled in the destruction of the beast, and his remnant being slain. It will not do, after such plain Scriptures, to say that some hundreds of years ago, ten kingdoms (which is doubted) gave their power to the pope, so trying to prove him to be the beast. Whatever they were then, it is not pretended by any that they are giving their power to him now, which is fatal to the theory of either the ten kingdoms or the beast having yet been seen at all.

Once more: the fourth or Roman empire is divided into ten horns or kingdoms (Daniel 7:23-24), corresponding in all respects to the ten toes of Daniel’s image, being its division at the time when the stone falls upon the feet■that is at the very end■and when "in the days of these kings" (Daniel 2:44), God sets up the kingdom which shall never be destroyed. In other words, the ten kings, receiving power at one hour with the beast, give him their power to the end of this dispensation when they share his destruction. The new dispensation is the setting up of the "kingdom, which shall never be destroyed." Now surely this proves that these kingdoms and the beast, to whom they are said to give their power, exist at the very end of this present dispensation, and not in times long past, as so many seem determined to have it. But if we look further into what is said of this remarkable division of the Roman earth into ten kingdoms, it will appear still more manifest that that division cannot yet have taken place, and if so, the Antichrist who, as we have seen, rises after them, is of necessity future also. The limits of what is called the Roman earth are sufficiently known to all, and no division of it which does not include the whole can be said to have fulfilled its division into the ten toes or kingdoms spoken of at the end. But whilst admitting that the legs of iron mean the east and west divisions of that empire, no scruple is shown in leaving out the former altogether (embracing as it does the portion most important in Bible history, namely the Holy Land, Syria, Egypt, Turkey and Greece), and placing the ten toes upon one foot of the image in Daniel 2:1-49. In fact, it was found impossible to take the Eastern empire into account at all, and so it was abandoned.

Thereafter the whole effort seems to have been directed to discover them in the Western, at the rise of the papacy, and the result is the submission to us of various different lists of ten kingdoms certainly, which if they ever existed at all, have long since confessedly disappeared. Whilst the pope, who, if he really had been the beast, ought to have disappeared with them (Revelation 19:19-21), is still strong enough to make the effort he is doing in our day to recover the power he has lost.

It would be a useless task to follow the extravagancies in regard to these pretended ten kingdoms and the part they are alleged to have acted in fulfilling the predictions of Scripture. The pages of Gibbon and others have been ransacked, and singular confirmations are alleged to have been discovered there, whilst between metaphorical and literal interpretation of Scripture language itself, as alternately it suited the purpose to have it so, the whole has been wrought into a tissue of extravagance sufficient to involve the work of prophetic inquiry, if not the study of the Bible itself, in ridicule and confusion.

If the fourth kingdom (the last) stretches, as it must, to the end of this dispensation, where should we expect to find the ten toes■in its condition at the end■but at the extremity of its existence? Originally the kingly power (however abused by him afterwards) was conferred on Nebuchadnezzar the declared head of the image, "thou art this head of gold," "the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom," ■and is seen descending through gradually baser metals, till mingled with the people's. This will be the remarkable feature in the ten kingdoms when they are seen, mingled "with the seed of men" ■the kingly power mixed with the people's■the governing with the governed - and all who are not willfully blind to it, may see the whole tendency already going in that direction. The supposed era of the rise of the papacy (for it is far from being settled even among those who date their predictions from it), is somewhere between the years 560 and 600, when in the pretended ten kingdoms the people's power was as little recognized as can well be imagined. How different now, when although the kingly power is needed to keep all together, the people are pronounced to be the source of all power, and when even in our loyal land the will of the governed is becoming more and more compulsory on the governor. The clay-iron principle is daily coming out in more recognized strength. And it is the distinguishing feature of the ten toes when developed, as they will speedily be, out of elements already displaying themselves in the feet from which these kingdoms arise.

What has caused much perplexity regarding their formation or rather the period at which it occurs, is not noticing that the times of the Gentiles which began on the rejection of Christ by "His own," intervene manifestly as an interruption or break in the prophetic history of "his people" the Jews, as given by Daniel among others. The nationality of the Jews (whilst individually they remain a standing proof of the literal fulfillment of Scripture denunciation) ceased for the time with the destruction under Titus, which consummated by building Aelia (Hadrian Capitolina) on its site to suppress the very name of Jerusalem. Indeed virtually the loss of their nationality may be dated from the fatal hour when they crucified their King after having disowned Him as the King of the Jews (John 19:15). Along with it must have ceased also for the time, the history of the Jewish people as a nation, inasmuch as they were no longer one.

Jerusalem has since been "trodden down of the Gentiles," and will continue to be so, by distinct announcement, "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). Who can affect

indifference as to the sign of their drawing to a close, which our Lord Himself has supplied in Matthew 24:1-51, where it is written, "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." From Scripture we shall see, as we proceed, that the return of the Jews to their own land which must precede "the end" as a matter of necessity, will be in unbelief, even as at the time they left it. Still it will be a return in such circumstances as to place them in it once more as a nation. The prophetic history broken off at their dispersion, will then be resumed preparatory to the mighty events to be enacted there, and the manifestation of "the abomination that maketh desolate," "the king of the fierce countenance," "the little horn," "Assyrian," "the Antichrist" who is to be broken without hands there on the mountains of Israel (Ezekiel 39:4; Isaiah 14:25; Daniel 2:45).

If it was given to Daniel, who was eminently a Jew, to know what should befall his people in the latter days (Daniel 10:14), surely it is to be expected that we should find the Jews nationally among the ten toes or kingdoms from such mention being made by him of these toes, and this is in accordance with their return in unbelief while the times of the Gentiles are still unfulfilled.

Yet everything indicates a short duration for these kingdoms when seen, else they would not be in harmony with the other proportions of the image which he describes. For the toes of it, of iron and miry clay" (implying certainly less duration than the nobler proportions of it which by general consent have passed their day), could not surely exceed in point of duration all the rest put together, as they would do if they dated from the rise of the papacy the more so as by the conditions of the prophecy they would require to be existing still, and until "the Stone" falls upon them. To make this more plain, it may just be noticed here that the Babylonish empire lasted 78 years, dating from the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, the Persian 200 years, the Grecian 300 years, in all about 578 years. These were succeeded by the Roman empire which was established under Augustus. Unless we are prepared to admit a break in the prophetic history, we must be prepared not only to show that the Roman earth, in its integrity, was then divided into ten kingdoms which are still existing, but still further to explain how such lengthened duration could consist with the harmony in the portions of the image which have been seen.

Again with regard to the time of these remarkable kingdoms, coexistent as they are to be with the Antichrist inasmuch as we have already seen they receive power at one hour with the beast, and agree to give him their kingdom until the purposes of God are fulfilled (Revelation 17:12, Revelation 17:17), we must remember, that Daniel in speaking of him under the name of the king of the fierce countenance (Daniel 8:23) distinctly places his appearing at the time of the end. This is confirmed by three different expressions all marking the same fact in the same chapter. In the preceding one, Antichrist is seen rising out of the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire will then have been divided, whilst here, it is out of the four into which Greece was parted under Alexander’s generals. But in this, as in all else, there is no discrepancy when it is examined, for the Roman empire received its most valuable additions from the territories which it wrested from the successors of Alexander. All therefore would be accomplished should Antichrist rise out of the Grecian portion of the Roman earth, "in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full" (Daniel 8:23). This time cannot have been seen yet, unless we are prepared to say that transgressors have come to the full in contradiction to the apostle Paul’s warning to Timothy concerning these same perilous times in the last days, which shows us that instead of amelioration, "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived"

(2 Timothy 3:13), till, under Antichrist, with the measure filled up in his times, the Lord Himself comes to destroy the wicked one, and supplant him with a reign of righteousness. The break in the prophetic history which is contended for may be seen perhaps still more distinctly if we examine the well-known prophecy of the 70 weeks of Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27), and the events declared to happen in them. Is it not evident, to begin with, that the prophecy must reach to the end of this dispensation from the mention of the terminating in the everlasting righteousness which is to be seen only when the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, Whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him" (Daniel 7:27)?

Doubtless in the loose interpretation of such passages, it has been assumed that all this may be said to have happened when our Lord came, and by suffering on the cross, established His right to the dominion He had so purchased. His right, thank God, is clear and will one day be vindicated in the destruction of all that interferes with it (Ezekiel 21:27). But whilst this evil generation lasts, is not the people of the saints of the Most High a persecuted people? And their Lord still "despised and rejected"? The everlasting righteousness and anointing of the Most Holy which concludes the 70 weeks (Daniel 9:24) are yet therefore to be seen in times as unlike the present as prevailing evil is to prevailing righteousness.

It is true the price was paid on the cross, but "the redemption of the purchased possession (inheritance)" (Ephesians 1:14) is still future, and until it is completed, the prophecy we are considering cannot be said to have been accomplished in all its parts. Yet as so large a portion has, without contradiction, been already fulfilled, how is it possible, without admitting the break spoken of, that the 70 weeks with the cutting off of Messiah occurring at the close of the 69th (Daniel 9:25-26), could reach the times of everlasting righteousness which are to be only when "the kingdom" is set up which shall never be moved (Daniel 2:44)? In fact, no other solution can be given of the difficulty than that which will be found to be in harmony with all else, namely, that Daniel, giving as he did, the future history of his people to the end and the promises which are yet to be made good to them, spoke of them as he was moved by the Holy Ghost only as a nation, which they ceased to be when their Messiah was "cut off" at the end of the 69th week, and when they themselves were scattered (as predicted elsewhere) and the gospel sent to the Gentiles. As their "times" draw to a close, Scripture indicates a return of the Jews again as a nation, although in unbelief (Ezekiel 22:19-22), when the last week, shown to be a week of years from the portion of the prophecy already fulfilled, will remain naturally still to be accomplished before the happy days of universal righteousness and the anointing the Most Holy are seen, which, as we are told, "seal up the vision and prophecy" (Daniel 9:24). And here it may just be noticed, that the word "week" is in the original simply a hebdomad or seventh, and would have been better so rendered in our translation, for a week with us implies a week of days only. In this instance, by the measure observed in the other parts of the prophecy already fulfilled (Messiah having been cut off at the end of the 69th hebdomad of years), it must mean a seventh of years also, or seven years. Jacob served Laban for Rachel seven years, and was said to have "fulfilled her week" or hebdomad (Genesis 29:28).

It is of this week accordingly that express mention is made immediately after (Daniel 9:27), the "he" there spoken of being manifestly the destroying prince that shall come, the Antichrist, with his abomination to the end, and with whom Daniel’s people will enter into a covenant, choosing, in the

strong delusion sent them, the false prince for the True.

What strange and deep meaning is there in that declaration of our Lord when so viewed, "I am come in My Father's Name, and ye receive Me not: if (or when) another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John 5:43). And this Antichrist will do, for he will exalt "himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped" (2 Thessalonians 2:4). His coming is declared to be with all "deceivableness of unrighteousness." He adapts himself, just as Napoleon Bonaparte did, to the prevailing system of the godless times he appears in, and especially to the prejudices of the Jewish people, who (probably by his help) in their own land once more as a nation with their great wealth, will rise into importance there. In this "deceivableness" also it is that the covenant is made with them for the whole remaining week, which Satan, who works through him (2 Thessalonians 2:9), knows perfectly will exhaust the term remaining of his power to deceive until the thousand years which follow should be fulfilled (Revelation 20:3). At first all seems to prosper. All the world is seen (Revelation 13:3) to wonder after the beast, and not only to wonder but to worship him and the devil too, who gives "him his power ... and great authority." How fearful to think even of such an apostasy as this. Well may it be called "THE apostasy," connected as it is with this prince that shall then have come and shown himself to be that "man of sin . . . the son of perdition," for in the midst of the week (although his covenant, such as it was, had been made for the whole), he throws off the mask and shows himself "that he is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4), with a false prophet too working miracles before him in the power of Satan himself -the mock trinity of hell then shown in opposition to the Trinity of heaven, in league too with all whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life! The last half of the seven years, when the covenant has been broken, are the times of the unequalled tribulation so often referred to already, and of which so much is said in Scripture. God has mercifully shortened those days, and told his people in every different mode of expressing it what the limit is; "the midst of the week," or hebdomad of seven years, that is, three years and a half, the "l260 days," the "42 months," the "time, times, and half a time," all expressing exactly that same duration, and all, if taken with the context, pointing distinctly to the same dreadful period.

During it God raises up two witnesses, doubtless individual men, from what is said of them, whom he miraculously protects during the time of "their testimony" (Revelation 11:3-7), inasmuch as He has never left Himself without a witness on the earth (Acts 14:17), nor does so, until His longsuffering being exhausted and His Spirit no longer striving, the earth and its Antichrist king whom it had chosen to its confusion, are left to the terrors which fall upon its inhabitants, as Christ descends with power and great glory to vindicate the insulted Majesty of His Father, and to show in His times "Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Timothy 6:15).

We must never overlook the prominent part assigned in Holy Scripture to Israel. The whole history and prophecies there revolve round it as a center. Israel alone was God's chosen people and recognized as such by Him. "You only have I known of all the families (nations) of the earth;" and it is added, "therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos 3:2). Accordingly the mention of every other nation is always in subordination to Israel and their connection with it for the time. They are seen to be advanced to punish Israel when Israel had sinned, and turned back again when repentance had brought back to it God's favour. And even in the New Testament, when the "middle wall of partition" between Jew and Gentile had been broken down, the earthly distinction of

the Jew and the favour yet to be shown to Jerusalem, are distinctly remembered and confirmed. God has not cast off His people whom He foreknew (Romans 11:2), nor will it be found that He has forgotten the promises He has made concerning them. "Behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy" (Isaiah 65:18), and connected as Jerusalem now is with the Gentiles by their adoption, it will yet be literally "the joy of the whole earth." To separate, therefore, the Jews from our thoughts of the blessedness which is yet to be in this, at present, blighted earth, is to overlook the promises as well as prophecies which connect them still, distinctly as a nation, with the better day that is coming. For yet "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:3-4). A difficulty has occurred here to some out of what they consider the small and insufficient mention which, according to this view of prophecy, is made of Christ's church on earth during "the times of the Gentiles" now running their course. They ask, "How can we think that startling events, like the rise of the papacy, should have occurred during the long 1800 years which have passed, without special notice of them for the church's guidance?" In reply to this, let us bear in mind the fuller dispensation as well as presence of the Holy Ghost the Comforter under which the Gentile church had been placed from the outset. And let us not, at the same time overlook the perfectly accurate and sufficient description which was given in addition to this, of the trials and treatment to which believers in it would be exposed, whilst "the times of the Gentiles" were being fulfilled. The disciples, until the Holy Ghost descended, had thought that Christ "at that time" would have restored the kingdom to Israel (Luke 24:20-21), even although our Lord Himself had warned them in Matthew 24:1-51 of what was to intervene, telling them that "all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places." And as to His people themselves, about to be gathered out of all nations, They shall "deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for My Name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another, and many false prophets (the pope among them) shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of (the) many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24:6-13).

It was inspiration alone which could, in the disciples" days, have drawn out with such fullness and accuracy the description of the "times of the Gentiles," keeping pace as they have been doing with the no less wondrous description of Israel and its dispersion until their close - still dwelling alone, and not mingled among the nations (Numbers 23:9) amongst whom their wanderings are. Deaf to their own prophets and not seeing the light around them, blindness in part having happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles shall have come in (Romans 11:25). The warning to and hope of the Gentiles was distinctly held out to them from the beginning, whilst as their times draw to a close, the prophetic history of Israel, with which their own fullness is shown to them by the apostle to be bound up inseparably (Romans 11:11-12), again comes in as a guide, if they will take heed to it, to all God's people, Jews as well as Gentiles, through the dark passage which still remains to be trodden before there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer Who shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Romans 11:26), at the close of the last of the 70 weeks.

These promises are indeed sure, but so let it be remembered, is every word of Scripture regarding the abomination of desolation and the time of trouble yet to be seen in Judea (Matthew 24:15-16) before that blessedness come. It is with the people of whom Daniel was speaking, as we have seen, that Antichrist will "confirm the covenant . . . for one week," although the whole ten kings of the Roman earth join together in giving "their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." The scene will be once more in Judea, for he, Antichrist, plants the tabernacle of his palaces there "between the seas (the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea - Daniel 11:45), in the glorious holy mountain" (a name given alone to Mount Zion, in Jerusalem), and there it is that he comes "to his end and none shall help him," for he is broken in "My land" and trodden down upon "My mountains" (Isaiah 14:25). Well then may we look to Jerusalem as the days of its being trodden down are so surely drawing to a close, for there again a people terrible from their beginning hitherto" (Isaiah 18:2) shall be gathered, that what remains of the prophecies concerning them may be fulfilled.

God has said that He will gather the house of Israel into their land again, not as we have been taking it for granted, in favour, but in anger. "As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace ... so will I gather you in Mine anger and in My fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you ... in the fire of My wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof" (Ezekiel 22:20-21).

If such is to be the course of events, how striking is it to see already amongst other signs of the times, the Eastern shores of the Mediterranean daily attracting greater notice and becoming of greater interest to the world. Greece, too, as well as Egypt (both spoken of in the times of the end), have reappeared only of late years, and the other two required with Turkey to complete the five toes of the Eastern foot, will not be wanting when the time comes - nay, may even already be guessed at. The transit through Egypt to our Indian possessions has for some years been drawing all eyes in that direction, and steam, with the introduction of railways there, will soon make its neighborhood yet more familiar and important. The jealousy with which the European powers are watching each other in that quarter, is revealed by the powerful fleets, in seeming idleness and maintained at prodigious cost to watch over the different supposed interests there, which must be correspondingly great. Turkey, too, extended for its own strength, is confessedly maintained in its integrity through the jealousy felt by the great powers of each other - a jealousy showing itself on all occasions, as in the recent and still unsettled question regarding the holy places, of which the Eastern and Western churches are alike claiming the right of custody.

However it may be arranged for the time, as probably it will, it has shown in addition to all else, that the feeling regarding Palestine, which has been dormant since the days of the crusades, is alive and stirring once more. The feeble sway of the Turk could not stand even now but for the interested protection given by others who are opposed to one of themselves occupying such a position of advantage over the rest. Such being the anomalous position of Palestine itself, who can help noticing the rising importance of its ancient possessors, the Jews, and how they have come to be spoken of as the bankers of Europe from their enormous command of capital?

What is to prevent such a people, by general consent, being called upon on any emergency to occupy that land as a mode of removing the difficulty at present existing? The more so, as neither by their religion, which unlike others tries to make no proselytes, nor by their arms, for they have

none, are they in a condition to disturb the balance of power there as any other movement would.

Things far more wonderful have happened, but be this as it may, the increasing consequence of the Jew and his land are among the undeniable realities of these days of energy, when money and mercantile interest are shown to be the great springs of action, both being especially the weapon of the Jew.

If religion cannot quite unite the families of the earth, the thought with its rulers now evidently is that mercantile interest may, and the Jew and Gentile may blend with Turk and Hindu with no mention of religious differences at all. This is also the system Antichrist will encourage and under which the "vile person" (Daniel 11:21) will be called "liberal," a word of the day used more and more to mean the same laxity of principle as characterizes Antichristianism and will still more characterize Antichrist in whom the vile man is to be personified. He it is who is destroyed by the King Who shall reign in righteousness" (Isaiah 32:1). After which, as may be noticed (verse 5), "the vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful." And if we look at the Jews themselves with their deathless yearning still for the land of their fathers and belief of future rest and greatness there after all their wanderings, how visibly do they seem to feel that a change in their condition is at hand? With the restoration to their own land is inseparably associated the rebuilding of their temple and renewal of sacrifices there. For this express purpose, a subscription has been already begun among many of the wealthiest of them, particularly in America, to erect a building like the "holy and beautiful house" of their fathers. Who can doubt their ability to raise any sum that might be required for such purpose, when they see their time come for executing it? The ancient temple, as all know, was on Mount Moriah, where the Jews have still a weekly lamentation with prayer in the words of their own prophet, whose warnings of old were disregarded, that its walls may again be built. "Be not wrath very sore, 0 LORD, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all Thy people. The holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste. Wilt Thou refrain Thyself for these things, O LORD? Wilt Thou hold Thy peace, and afflict us very sore?" (Isaiah 64:9-12). But it is not on Mount Moriah, for the mosque of Omar there on the site of the ancient building, forbids the profanation of "the unbeliever," and the spot likely is understood to be on Mount Zion, with which, let it be remembered, all their future glory is connected. And how strange does such a locality appear as we read that "the tabernacles of his palace" are to be planted also there (Daniel 11:45), "in the glorious holy mountain," a name applied to none other than to itself. It is there "on My holy hill of Zion" that God will place His King (Psalms 2:6), and it is on it too that first the tabernacles of Antichrist will be seen. The false deliverer will doubtless appeal to Scripture in support of his claim to be received, for it is "out of Sion" the Deliverer comes (Romans 11:26). If then the Jewish temple be erected on Mount Zion by Israel still in unbelief, where else would Antichrist seek to restore for them their sacrifices and thereafter to show "himself that he is God," but in the place of which these things are spoken, and where the Jews themselves expect the Lord of the whole earth will one day reign?

Surely an allusion, without fancy, to this placing of the false where the true is yet to be, may be traced in Ezekiel 43:5, Ezekiel 43:7-8, where, in speaking of the return of God’s glory to the wondrous temple he had been describing so minutely, and which is yet to be seen in better days than these, he says, "The glory of the LORD filled the house ... And He said unto me, Son of man,

the place of My throne, and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and My holy Name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places. In their setting of their threshold by My thresholds, and their post by My posts, and the wall between Me and them, they have even defiled My holy Name by their abominations that they have committed; wherefore I have consumed them in Mine anger." The "abomination of desolation," let us remember, will before that latter glory come, have been seen "standing where it ought not" (Mark 13:14) In the holy place," and Antichrist too, consumed by "the brightness of His coming." The Jews are looking to the restoration of their daily sacrifice in the temple that is to be, but confess they know not how the sacred fire is to be again lighted on the altar. This will afford their Antichrist another occasion to lay claim to their belief, for among the great wonders done in his presence (the devil giving him his power), "he maketh fire to come down from heaven . . . in the sight of (all) men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do" (Revelation 13:13-14). The priests of Baal in the days of Elijah failed in their attempt to prove by fire that he was a god, but in the latter day, when the transgressors are come to the full" and such practisings perfected, the false prophet, who will then be ministering in the permitted working of Satan himself, is not so restrained.

Yet with the fire so kindled for the sacrifice, it is only at first and until established in power that Antichrist goes in with the desire of the Jews to see all restored in their temple again, for we read that "in the midst of the week," when he breaks the covenant he had beguiled them with, "he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease" (Daniel 9:27), his own overspreading abomination exalting itself above every thing, false or true. For it is then that he will be seen opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God (2 Thessalonians 2:4). Paul foretells that his coming will be "after the working of Satan" (2 Thessalonians 2:9) when he does come, which John also affirms (Revelation 13:2), and Isaiah, still more remote, is heard declaring in unison with what they, along with Daniel, had declared, that their "agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you (see warning also in Matthew 24:15, Matthew 24:23), for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only when he shall make you to understand the doctrine" (see margin, Isaiah 28:18-19).

It is to the same terrible individual that the allusion is also in Isaiah 33:1, "Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! When thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled." And further on, of the desolation that marks his progress, at Isaiah 33:8-9, "the highways lie waste, the wayfaring man ceaseth: he hath broken the covenant, he hath despised the cities, he regardeth no man. The earth mourneth and languisheth." And to the same great crisis is the allusion in Psalms 55:20-21, "He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords." How fearful will these times be, and who shall live when God doeth this!

Mercifully, as we have seen, the days are shortened, else no flesh should be saved. In them "men will seek for death, but shall not find it." They are the days of unequalled tribulation following upon "the falling away" and revelation of that man of sin, the son of perdition, who had been mistaken for "the Son of man," the "Heir of all things.

01.03. His Characteristics and Duration

Development of Antichrist Chapter 3. His Characteristics and Duration The very name of Antichrist implies a denial of Christ having come in the flesh as well as an assumption of His place and dignity; and so exactly does this description apply, that to deny Christ in any measure or shape is held to indicate the working of that spirit of Antichrist which was already in the world in the apostle■s day (1 John 4:3). In one form or another, therefore, more or less prominently, this characteristic will be seen to mark the "many antichrists" that have appeared, whilst "the Antichrist" himself, following at the end, when transgressors have come to the full, and having necessarily (to begin with), like all that preceded him, denied the Spirit of Christ as utterly opposed to his, will reject the Son Himself and thereafter deny the Father also, exalting himself, without any concealment then, above all that is called God.

It is clear, from the terms employed that Paul as well as John speaks of one and the same opposition to the truth, for the former tells of the mystery of iniquity already working in his day (2 Thessalonians 2:7), and the latter, that it was already in the world (1 John 4:3), whilst both describe the evil as characterized by the same spirit of enmity. It is reserved however, as we have seen, for the last days to reveal Antichrist himself in all his malignity and impiety, for it is not until then that he is seen personally sitting as God "in the temple of God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

Another mention of him is in Daniel 11:1-45, giving a further detail of the recklessness with which he proceeds, and by which he is so strongly characterized. "The king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers (does not this imply he will be an individual man?), nor the desire of women (that is Christ, of Whom all Jewish women desired to be the mother), nor regard any god; for he shall magnify himself above all." The times too which will introduce this great enemy are, as they advance, to exhibit more and more of the spirit which is to be fully developed in him. They are, as has been seen, spoken of as "the last times" in which the wicked shall do wickedly, and when "none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand" (Daniel 12:10). This is in harmony with what the apostle declares, "knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (world) (2 Peter 3:3-4). All this is descriptive of the spirit of Antichrist now rapidly maturing for his development. In 2 Timothy 3:2-5 we have, again, the same last days described when "men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers (we have seen how Antichrist breaks his covenant), false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good . . . having a form of godliness (Antichrist will have his forms to begin with also), but denying the power thereof." From all such things Timothy is commanded to turn away. And surely as the last days in which they are to be, draw on, it well becomes all who, like him, have learned and been assured, to turn more earnestly than ever to the

Holy Scriptures they have known "from a child," and which are declared, in distinct reference to these "perilous times," to be able to make wise unto salvation, not through such teaching as Antichrist■s will be, but "through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

It is not without reason that such a caution is given, for few perhaps are aware how subtle and dangerous already is the attempt to criticize and impugn the great truth that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16), and to introduce other appliances. The deceivableness of unrighteousness, let us always remember, comes in, not by openly denying what it means to overthrow, but by introducing by little and little such specious corrections and improvements as, in the end, will answer the purpose which an open avowal at the outset would have prevented. The Antichrist does not at his first appearance shock the prejudices of those whose faith he at last overthrows. He comes in "by flatteries" (Daniel 11:21), such as are grateful to the natural man who finds that something may, with apparent plausibility, be said against that which has been the great barrier to the indulgence of his own passions and will. He finds in Scripture much that is "foolishness" to him (1 Corinthians 2:14), but which fear has kept him from openly questioning, as long as his belief in inspiration remains. Let however that once be shaken by the idea of errors and incorrect statements having crept in, or that words may be altered from their ordinary plain meaning, and very soon the wholesome reverence is gone.

Such at present (1853, Ed.) is the direct tendency of the German school above all the others, which are, however, beginning to follow in its wake, whilst surely warning might be taken from the deep rooted infidelity, which in consequence is more and more displaying there the danger of all such tampering with Holy Writ.

If France is distinguished by its licentious infidel writings, the slower thinking German is ponderously advancing by a still more dangerous road to the rejection in the end of all inspired truth together, whilst his metaphysical subtleties and criticisms are already perceptibly infecting the faith of his neighbors. Such popular writers as Goethe and Richter have done much in their day to prepare the public mind for this, and an echo of their style may be caught more and more distinctly from our own shores, where men like Carlyle and Kingsley have caught it up. "Great swelling words of vanity" draw men out of their depth to indulge, at the risk of themselves and others, in mental exercises there all leading to deeper unbelief, and "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Timothy 4:3-4). And such really is the case already with these teachers; some of whom are turning deliberately into fables much of the historic portion of Scripture. One of the most distinguished of them, Ewald, a German critic who himself wrote a "history of the people of Israel," speaks of the authors of the prophecy of Moses and Balaam as "prophetic relators of what had already happened, and of their predictions being a peculiar style of authorship"! He also maintains that so far from Moses having written the book of Deuteronomy, it was not written for 800 years after his death, and that whoever compiled it then, had felt himself at such a distance from the events he professed to relate, as "to have allowed his fancy the freest play with them in his way of treating history." He tries also to show that "the Patriarchs were polytheistic in their religion," into which "Mosaicism" introduced a "certain monotheistic character," which is shown by the oath between Jacob and Laban calling on the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, as two different Gods recognized by them also by there being altars to the God of Bethel, and the God of Abraham!

Yet this is the man whom another, still better known, and who is domesticated among us in high places with great influence derived from his distinguished personal character and accomplishments as a scholar, welcomes into the field of Bible criticism with the strongest expressions of joy. And for an explanation of this, let any one examine what the Chevalier Bunsen himself says in his well-known work on Egyptian history, and he will be at no loss to discover the origin of this liking. Mr. Bunsen will there be seen to speak of the chronology and history of the Old Testament just as lightly as M. Ewald does, and in a very different manner from Paul, who quotes it in his epistles to the Romans, Galatians and Hebrews, as literally and strictly true, just as the martyred Stephen had done before, who, we are told, spoke "being full of the Holy Ghost." But these names, alas! are not solitary instances of such infection having already extended among us. It has gone much further than people are willing to believe, and men of high standing in literature and power of writing, have not only themselves become tainted with this sort of skepticism, but are laboring to spread it in what they declare to be their zeal for the truth.

Listen to what their organ, the Westminster Review, of July 1852 says, "The theory of the origin of Christianity from agencies exclusively divine and of the infallible character of the canonical books, can no more be restored now than Roman history can be put back to what it was before Niebuhr■s time" (page 175). And further on, "This in spite of every resistance from the rigor of the old theology, is an inevitable consequence of the modern historical criticism. But its large and genial apprehensions will open for us new admirations, it will do away with an unnatural dualism, and reinstate the great families of man in unity" (page 204). This is pure antichristianism which, by removing "the offence of the cross" as producing what it calls "dualism," or as our Lord Himself had previously declared it to be, "division" (Luke 12:51-53), would try to introduce a system of godless brotherhood such as Antichrist himself will ere long be seen presiding over, and all the world wondering after, and worshipping him. It is in this direction that one of the dangers of these "perilous times" lies, for if Scripture is to be so dealt with, what has man left to meet the "strong delusion" in which Antichrist will come with his lie? It is for him to launch without helm or compass into a troubled sea where currents more dangerous than the winds and the waves are running and drifting insensibly all that is floating on them towards a fatal shore. Of the doctrines springing up under such a system we have already seen some specimens, whilst an occasional glimpse is afforded us of results still more matured, and which may well make us tremble and cling closer than before to Bible truth. Within a very short period it has been openly broached in Germany in so many words, that from the confusion prevailing in religious belief as well as in all social arrangements so markedly seen in our days, it has become evident that the power which has governed mankind hitherto is become unfit for the task, and that man himself, therefore, no longer in his infancy, must rouse up to undertake it!

Such as these are the advances being made by antichristianism even in the midst of us. The barriers in the way are the Scriptures in their integrity, "given by inspiration of God," and "which are able to make . . . wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." And along with them, the promised teaching of the Holy Ghost "the Comforter . . . Whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things" (John 14:26). When these are disowned and cast off, as we see they are already beginning to be by so many, what is to hinder men coming to worship the devil in the end (Revelation 13:4), as well as the Antichrist "whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness

in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a (the) lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12).

It may seem hard to connect in any way, even the remotest, with such dangerous writers a very different class of men who have been assigning to Scripture words a metaphorical interpretation, chiefly to carry out prophetic theories of their own. Yet the plain truth is that the tendency of all such liberties is to encourage the profane hands which, with widely different feelings and intentions, are touching the Scriptures of truth. If Christians among themselves are seen by the unbelieving multitude without, claiming a latitude of meaning which would make inspiration say anything, what right have they to complain if they themselves are charged with inconsistency in their way of reading it? "That the Scripture might be fulfilled," is an expression of frequent occurrence in it, and always to point out that, however men might previously have been viewing it, the fulfillment of a prophecy when so announced proved it to have been a literal one.

What is contended for, therefore, on this point is, that by such warning in the past, Christians are bound to receive what is written in a literal sense, except where symbols, as in the Revelation, are avowedly the medium of instruction, or in cases where the language is shown to be figurative from the circumstance that otherwise an absurdity or physical impossibility would arise. This was the rule of the "judicious" Hooker, and in fact what we ourselves observe in regard to every book we read, and in every conversation we hold; also, for instance, in the case of the woman in Revelation 12:1-17, seen "clothed with the sun and with the moon under foot," where plainly a symbolic meaning attaches to her as much as to the seven candlesticks which symbolize churches. Our own language abounds in metaphor, and we can scarcely utter a sentence which does not contain one. Yet we are living in a practical age where literal meaning is indispensable, and where in fact no one feels at a loss as to what is really meant. Why should we treat Scripture language differently? Or say that "that man of sin" means a succession of men, and "that wicked" or lawless one "whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of His coming," a succession of evil principles to be absorbed by the advance of the Spirit of Truth? The mischief to all from such lax interpretations is incalculable, and is leading many in despair to ask like Pilate "What is truth?" without waiting for an answer to their question.

It has been tried throughout to point attention to what is said of a personal Antichrist who is yet to be seen, and who in the latter days (which must be near) will realize and embody the spirit of the many antichrists that are in the world. His characteristics, of which we are now particularly speaking, must necessarily be in unison with his times from the welcome they give him, and therefore what Scripture says of them is full of warning as to what manner of man he will himself be when he is seen.

Jude, in his epistle, gives us, along with the other inspired writers already referred to, a striking outline of these last days, and in perfect accordance with all other Scripture tells what Enoch, from remotest times, had prophesied of their termination by the Lord Himself coming "with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (Jude 1:14-15). In reading this short epistle, how

wonderful does it appear that with such details of times so concluded as to make them to be as they are emphatically called (Jude 1:18) "the last," any one should still be found looking for a general amelioration as Scripture truth is disseminated.

Yet thousands of such there are who will see nothing even of such a "coming of the Lord" as is here spoken of, but who persist in making it an entirely spiritual one or gradual working of His power on the hearts of men to convince them finally of their ungodly deeds. Whilst entertaining such ideas, they will not see anything of "the apostasy" yet to be (in general they believe it to have been already seen in the papacy), or of the man of sin who is to be over it and thought now to be the succession of popes about to terminate, when no bar will remain to the realization of their expectations of such a spread of gospel light and truth as will turn the earth and its inhabitants into all they are most unlike to at present. Is there no danger when even Christian men are found thinking so, and stopping their ears against such plain Scriptures as would warn them how they try to find good where God tells them they will find only evil? If Jude, among others, speaks of "the last time" and refers to a distinct coming of the Lord to terminate them with "judgment executed upon all" (Jude 1:18,15), how vain the thought of seeing any distinguishing mark in the people that will be living in them, but that which he applies so terribly - murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouths speaking great swelling words, having men■s persons (not Christ■s) in admiration because of advantage (Jude 1:16). Is it not possible to rouse Christians to consider all this, when they see the most infidel and godless all rejoicing with them in the prospect of increasing emancipation, and of the "good times" that are coming as ancient prejudices disperse before the dawn of reason; when Scripture accuracy and inspiration is impugned and found to be a hindrance to the progress of the day; when commercial interest, not religious principles which are more and more pushed into a corner, is looked on as the bond which is yet to unite in brotherhood, and when in a word man is to do everything and be everything, and God a mere idea in all this scheme of coming happiness? Is there nothing in Scripture warning that instead of it, there is yet to be "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21), a trouble which is to yield to no scheme of amelioration which man can devise, or be averted by such a course as he is pursuing? To speak of such things may seem ungracious, but so has the truth of God ever seemed when opposing the willfulness of man whose first temptation by Satan (Genesis 3:5) was to be independent of his Maker, as he will with his Antichrist succeed in tempting him to hazard being again. In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt not surely die, was the lie of the devil which prevailed with our first parents to eat, that "your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." The same lure is being displayed to their descendants under circumstances and with a result which will show that, in himself, man is hopelessly evil (Jeremiah 17:9, Jeremiah 17:18), and that the finished work and perfect righteousness of Christ alone can restore the beauty and order that has been marred.

Under all conditions, whether in Patriarchal, Mosaic, or Christian dispensations, man will in the end have been shown a failure, the more unmistakable if in the face of all the lessons and experience of the past, the last days are to exceed (as they will do if Scripture be true■and it is) in daring wickedness all that preceded them. But when "the transgressors are come to the full" (Daniel 8:23), and man in the trouble that is coming has been shown how vain his thoughts of amendment and amelioration have been, the Lord Himself "will finish the work, and cut it short in

righteousness; because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth" (Romans 9:28). With regard to the duration of the reign of the Antichrist, we have seen that in his connection with Jewish history, a hebdomad or seven years is wanting to complete the seventy weeks of Daniel■s prophecy, and that during all that "week" he acts a prominent part. There is no Scripture to lead us to think he is seen for any considerable period before it, and certainly he is not seen after it, for the anointing of the Most Holy and the bringing in everlasting righteousness (Daniel 9:24) closes all, as "the transgression" itself is finished by the destruction of that wicked or lawless one at Christ■s coming (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

There is much mischief in trying to be wise above what is written, for Scripture is not given to gratify an idle curiosity, but for our instruction and correction in righteousness, "that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). This surely implies that he is also to be thoroughly furnished against all evil ones, which again, we believe to be the reason why so much is said by both prophet and apostle of the character of the unrighteousness in the last times, as well as of the Antichrist himself under whom the consummation of it is to be. For then, through what is permitted to Satan, it will be "with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10), to deceive, were it possible, "the very elect," unless thoroughly furnished by warning against it. To show that the notion of a personal Antichrist, with a limited duration, is at least not a novel idea, it will serve to look here a little into what "the fathers" thought and wrote on the subject. In doing so, however, let it not be imagined that there is any intention of conceding to them and their opinions the place of authority which a large party in this country are trying to obtain for them now. The attempt being made is, in fact, a revival of what was witnessed in the reign of James and more openly in that of his son, when the first fervors of Luther■s reformation were subsiding, and when Andrews and Laud sought, by magnifying them as links in the apostolic succession, to exalt thereby ecclesiastical power in opposition to the Puritans. But the deference thus shown to an imaginary perfection and unity in the early ages gave a great advantage to Rome, and then as now, many were the secessions to it from among the high church party.

It seems to be overlooked that the testimony of these same fathers extends over twelve centuries, including among them the darkest ages of popery, and that, from the very outset, there is not only the greatest discrepancy of opinion on nearly every important point, but also the most flagrant error. In fact, the "catena" is one of false instead of consistent Scripture doctrine, and what is remarkable the nearer the apostolic times, the more grievous appears to have been the perversion. With the exception of the existence of God in a Trinity of Persons, and the belief that the Roman empire would end in ten kingdoms and Antichrist to be destroyed by the Lord■s coming, there is scarcely a truth which is not overlaid or distorted. The danger has ever been from within the professing church rather than from without, and of this the apostle, accordingly, is seen warning God■s people in his day of what they were to expect when he himself was withdrawn from them. "Know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away (many) disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30). To quote here from the fathers therefore is for the alone purpose of showing that the truth of a personal Antichrist at least was, amidst all their differences, nearly unanimously maintained by them all. They further considered that he would come out of the Roman empire, when towards the close, it should have become divided into ten

kingdoms, three of which are to be subdued by him, and all to continue supporting him to the last.

Hippolytus, one of them (died c236) expressly says (in "de Antichristo") that "the ten states, meaning the ten toes of Daniel■s image, which will at length appear will be democracies," which is in accordance seemingly with the increasingly "clay-iron" character of the present day. (For an account of the testimony of Hippolytus, see Mr. B W Newton s "Babylon and Egypt, Appendix A"■ Ed).

Another of them, Irenaeus (c130-c202), considers that "when they are reigning, and beginning to settle and aggrandize themselves, suddenly one will come and claim the kingdom and terrify them as foretold." In the same treatise the same old writer says, "the adversary will sit in a temple built at Jerusalem, endeavoring to show himself to be Christ." And again, "It will be he who will resuscitate the kingdom of the Jews." The Jews themselves, it is sufficiently known, are prepared to receive one who will do so, having rejected our Lord and theirs, Whose life as well as death had disappointed those among them who at that time "trusted it had been He Which should have redeemed Israel" (Luke 24:21). The veil being upon their eyes, they are to this day expecting a deliverer of their own race* according to promise, whilst nevertheless rejecting still the idea of His being also the Son of God, as they say "Israel■s God is One God." The mystery of Christ in the flesh, despised then, is now altogether "hid from their eyes," which they are opening wider and wider as the time draws near, to descry him who, coming in his own name, will be received by them (John 5:43).

*(It is strange how general the belief was in ancient days, that in some way or other he is to be especially connected with the tribe of Dan. This may have proceeded from such as the following considerations: The sceptre was not to depart from Judah (Genesis 49:10), and yet we read "Dan shall judge his people;" with what sort of judgment may be inferred at least from the description given to him, as "a serpent by the way . . . that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward;" and that too followed by an aspiration of the patriarch as if he foresaw trouble coming, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O LORD" (Genesis 49:16-18). The same with Moses: (Deuteronomy 33:22) "Dan is a lion■s whelp: he shall leap from Bashan" (a word used in Scripture to denote pride and opposition). "Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round" (Psalms 22:12). "Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan" (Amos 4:1-13:]). In Jeremiah 4:1-31, where "the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way" (Jeremiah 4:7) with his chariots as a whirlwind, and horses swifter than eagles (Jeremiah 4:13), to give out their voice against the cities of Judah (Jeremiah 4:16) because she hath been rebellious against Me (Jeremiah 4:17), it is a voice from Dan that declareth it (Jeremiah 4:15). In Jeremiah 8:16, "the snorting of his horses was heard from Dan," with the whole land trembling with the sound of his strong ones. Whilst in Revelation 7:1-17, where the tribes of Israel are sealed before the judgments are let loose on Antichrist and his followers, that of Dan is omitted, and the name of a half tribe substituted for it. In Amos 8:14 too, a curse is recorded against them that say "thy God, O Dan, liveth", and like them who receive the mark of the beast, "they shall fall, and never rise up again").

Irenaeus says ("Against Heresies, Book 5.30") that "the reign of Antichrist will be for three years and a half (the last half of the hebdomad), when he shall be destroyed by the Lord from heaven, and the kingdom of the Just One be established."

Many extracts of a like nature might be given, but it seems unnecessary here to extend quotations or name the names of the many others who express themselves similarly, with some important differences of opinion. (For a fuller account of the testimony of the fathers to a personal Antichrist, see Mr. B W Newton■s "Prospects of the Ten Kingdoms, 2nd Edition, Appendix A"■ Ed.).

What has been quoted is chiefly to show that the idea of a personal Antichrist with a short supremacy at the close of this dispensation is no novelty, and that on the contrary it was in fact the universal early belief, men then taking Scripture words to mean what they really said. With some shades of difference, then, the general belief in early days was that Antichrist, as has been shown, would suddenly show himself at the very end of the Roman empire, which once was dominant, but now, in our days, is in a manner dormant. That he will knit it into one again by his skill and enterprise, engrafting Judaism upon the worship he sets up;■that he will then acquire the title of King of the Roman Empire, from the ten kings giving him their kingdom (Revelation 17:17)■that kingdom, be it recollected, being the last of four monarchies shown in the image of Daniel when "the Stone" falls, and he along with all its parts passes away as rapidly as he arose.

Thus Nebuchadnezzar, as the head or first king, received a pure monarchy from God (Daniel 2:37-38). Antichrist arising out from among the toes and also manifestly the last king, receives his power which is clay-iron or democratic ("mingled with the seed of men") apparently from the people or the kings over them, but in reality from the devil, as the "sure Word of prophecy" distinctly tells and makes us see (Revelation 13:4). Such is the contrast and such the end and destruction of the image by a still purer monarchy "which shall never be destroyed." Christ, the God-man, receiving it into His hands from "the God of heaven," even as Nebuchadnezzar, a fallen man, had been entrusted with it at first, had corrupted it, and like his successors, been deprived of it.

People in our days persist in saying that the destructive action of "the Stone" (Daniel 2:44-45) is the spread of the gospel, Christ■s spiritual reign constituting the millennium. But this, surely, a very slight consideration might show them to be impossible, for it would imply that Gentile power (the ten kingdoms) will be coexisting with the kingdom of Christ, which, on the contrary, it will be seen breaks in pieces and consumes all these kingdoms (Daniel 2:44). It is vain to say this prophecy was accomplished at the first advent, because the ten toes were not then in existence for the stone to fall upon. And no more could it be so when the gospel was preached by the apostles, else the Roman empire would then have been divided into ten kingdoms, which historically was not the case.

Another strange attempt, chiefly since Luther■s days, has been to convert the 1260 days into 1260 years, to measure out the supposed duration of the papacy which he fancied to be the man of sin as already alluded to. (For a fuller treatment of the year-day theory, see Mr. B W Newton■s "The Antichrist Future and the 1260 Days of Antichrist■s Reign" ■ Ed.).

Having assumed this measure of time to be satisfactorily proved, it is now deliberately argued that the pope must be the Antichrist inasmuch as no reign but his could at all be said to embrace so long a period, and this, without exaggeration or unfairness in the way of stating it, is a specimen of the reasoning to which so many are seen surrendering their own better judgment. What is known by the name of the year-day theory (a sort of contradiction in terms to begin with), is based chiefly on a perversion of two passages in Scripture■Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6■"I have appointed

(given) thee each day for a year." Had this meant, as alleged, that henceforth in all prophecy a day was to be taken for a year, what becomes of that most interesting one among all others uttered by our Lord Himself, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," it being immediately added "but He spake of the temple of His body" (John 2:19, John 2:21), which surely no man will say was not raised on the third day, when "they came early in the week and found the stone rolled away," and the "two men in shining garments" declaring He was risen as He said?

01.04. His Destruction and Its Consequences

Development of Antichrist Chapter 4. His Destruction and Its Consequences In saying so much of Antichrist, it was impossible not to anticipate to a certain extent, what ought in proper order to have fallen under this division of the subject. It was necessary to allude to some of its circumstances in establishing his personality, the time of his appearing, and his duration. But having proceeded so far, it may be objected that in speaking of the Antichrist hitherto, we have been assuming without proof, that many different names in different parts of Scripture are all used to indicate this one and the same individual. It is admitted that similarity of destruction is not in itself sufficient to establish identity, and therefore this seems to be the place to show how the different names claimed for him in the Old Testament, as well as in the New, do, in fact, apply to him and to no one else.

First then as connecting the Old with the New Testament in what is said of the Antichrist, let us take the "little horn"* of the first to compare with the "man of sin," "the son of perdition" of the second. The one name occurs in Daniel 7:1-28, the other in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17, and we have been taking them till now as applying to one and the same individual. That this is a necessity will be seen without difficulty if the chronology is attended to.

*(That "a horn" in the days of Babylon was used as the emblem of kingly rank, may be witnessed in the Nineveh sculptures recently deposited in the British Museum, where "horns" on their head-dress or caps are seen distinctly denoting the monarch from his attendants. This looks like a silent testimony introduced among us at the right time to the especial propriety with which "the little horn" is taken in Scripture to denote the rising power of this "king of Babylon," who, we have seen, is like the sculptures themselves, so associated with Assyria, as to be called "the Assyrian").

Daniel■s vision of the four beasts is explained: "these great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever" (Daniel 7:17-18). This is the general outline given of the world■s history. But in the explanation which follows we see the first three rapidly passed over, whilst the description lingers upon the fourth and last to call our special attention to it. "Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows" (Daniel 7:19-20).

It is contended that the power so described must be in full dominion at the end, for the prophet proceeds thus, "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom" (Daniel 7:21-22), which again, further on, is declared to be the "everlasting kingdom" (Daniel 7:27). It is also explained of him (Daniel 7:25) that "he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times

and the dividing of time" (the three and a half years, the 1260 days, the 42 months already so frequently alluded to).

Now if we compare all this with what is said in 2 Thessalonians of the "man of sin," it cannot but be admitted that this little horn and he must be identical, for not only do their characters and actings agree perfectly, but both are seen "exalted" at the close, without mention of their being rivals to each other, and continuing till the saints possess the kingdom, which from other Scriptures cannot be until the Lord terminates the oppression by the brightness of His coming to destroy that wicked or lawless one; which, being in both instances in the singular case (2 Thessalonians 2:8 and Daniel 7:26) also forbids the thought of their being two such enemies, both exalting themselves above all, and both in existence when the time comes for the saints to possess the kingdom under the whole heaven at Christ■s appearing, and not till then (see John 16:19-22).

Another name we have claimed for him is "the Assyrian," which occurs, among other places, in three of the chapters of Isaiah, where he is seen with the same prominence involved in what is to be only at the coming of the Lord. In the first of these chapters (Isaiah 10:5), he is spoken of as "the rod of Mine anger," sent against "the people of My wrath . . . to tread them down like the mire in the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so (that he is but an instrument); but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few." It is then added, "When the Lord hath performed His whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish . . . the stout (proud) heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it" (Isaiah 10:12-13). The time at which this happens, as we have seen, is, when God has performed his "whole work," after which (Isaiah 10:20) in that day "the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel." The Assyrian having smitten them after the manner of Egypt, the Lord■s indignation is seen to cease in their destruction,■the remnant returns, and the consumption overflows with righteousness. Who can doubt that this will only be in the days when Israel at last exclaims, "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord," to destroy Antichrist, the little horn, the lawless one, the Assyrian? In Isaiah 14:25, mention is again made of the destruction of the Assyrian whose hand had been stretched out, not upon Israel alone, but upon "all nations," with mention at the same time of the downfall of Babylon, which is then to be swept with the besom of destruction, and with whose king each candid reader of the chapter will see "the Assyrian" identified. The chronology here again determines the place to be that of Antichrist■s, for on the destruction of "the Assyrian," the yoke and the burden departs from off their shoulders, as he is broken "in My land," a consummation only to be at Christ■s coming.

Once more, in Isaiah 30:31, the destruction of "the Assyrian" by that coming, is still more distinctly referred to, with allusion to the joy of "tabrets and harps" which follows it, after the Lord shall have caused "His glorious voice to be heard," and shown "the lighting down of His arm, with the indignation of His anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones" (Isaiah 30:30). Who can doubt that this is Antichrist, the wicked one, who is here called "the Assyrian," destroyed by the brightness of His coming?

It is equally evident that the Assyrian and the king of Babylon must be the same individual, the name being derived from the locality of Babylon in the land of Chaldea, embraced in Assyria. In

one of the chapters just referred to (Isaiah 14:1-32), they are distinctly identified, whilst to the king of Babylon there, the exact words and characteristics of Antichrist under all the names we have been considering, are given. "I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north" etc. (Isaiah 14:13-14). And mark how the accompaniments again determine the chronology to be, like all the rest, at the coming of the Lord, for then only will it be said, "the whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they brake forth into singing" (Isaiah 14:7); "The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth" (Isaiah 14:5-6). The whole passage is strikingly descriptive not only of Antichrist, as given under other names identifying this, from the peculiarity, with all the rest, but of his coming by the agency of "hell" (Isaiah 14:9), or as we read in Thessalonians, "after the working of Satan," and in Revelation 13:2, of the dragon, giving him "his power, and his seat, and great authority." Nor ought it to be overlooked, that when this "king of Babylon" (who can be from this description none other than the Antichrist), "falls" (Isaiah 14:4-12), how distinctly his city, which is described similarly to that in the Revelation, is seen to fall with him; its very name thereafter is cut off (Isaiah 14:22), whilst the designation of "the Assyrian" is there applied to its king as if to mark the locality in which that Babylon is to be at its destruction. In Ezekiel 31:1-18, we find the Assyrian spoken of with remarkable distinctness, both in regard to his exaltation and his overthrow, the description being addressed to the king of Egypt■a name constantly employed in Scripture, as must have been observed, to express the help derived from the world, in opposition to the help which cometh from God alone. The Assyrian■s connection with such must therefore be intimate, and accordingly at the conclusion of the warning given to all against attempted independence, as well as against seeking such godless appliances, the Assyrian, with "Pharaoh and all his multitude" are classed as one, as both the help and the helper are seen overthrown together. "To whom art thou thus like in glory . . . among the trees of Eden? Yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden into the nether parts of the earth; thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised with them that be slain by the sword. This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord God" (Ezekiel 31:18). In Hosea 5:1-15, Ephraim is seen to have been among the seekers of this help, "When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jereb (translated in the margin, the king that should plead); yet could he not heal . . . your wound" (Hosea 5:13).

Again, in Hosea 11:1-4, Israel and Ephraim, called as they had been out of Egypt and drawn with the cords of a man and with bands of love, yet "knew not that I had healed them." And mark what this their stubbornness will at last lead to. "He (Israel) shall not return into the land of Egypt (where the former oppression had been), but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return" (Hosea 11:5). Yet though God will give them such a king in His anger, hear the yearnings of His compassion and His mercy in the end, "I will not execute the fierceness of Mine anger . . . for I am God and not man" (Hosea 11:9). The Assyrian, their last oppressor, does not finally destroy them. "They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria: and I will place them in their houses, saith the Lord" (Hosea 11:11). In Micah 5:1-15, Christ, Who comes out of Bethlehem Ephratah, is distinctly seen to be the Deliverer from "the Assyrian" to mark that his destruction is identical with that of the man of sin, the son of perdition, and that they are therefore one and the same. "And this man (the Ruler of Israel Whose goings forth have been from everlasting) shall be the peace, when the Assyrian . . . shall tread in our palaces" (plant the

tabernacles of his palace . . . in the glorious Holy Mountain■Daniel 11:45). How accurate the agreement and how perfect the identification of the Assyrian with the king in Daniel also, "who does according to his will," as well as with Antichrist, the man of sin, who is destroyed by Christ■s coming.

Another name given to him is the beast. This is in the Revelation and occurs there three times. In the first of these (Revelation 13:1-2), his rising is described with seven heads and ten horns, which must be those spoken of by Daniel (Daniel 7:24), as signifying the ten kingdoms of the Roman earth which were to be at the end. The "blasphemy" written upon his head and the devil giving him his power, can surely be supposed to apply to none other than to him who under the title of the man of sin, the son of perdition, comes also distinctly in the time of the end "after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thessalonians 2:1-17). The next mention of the beast (Revelation 17:1-18) shows him in connection with Babylon and the ten kings also, making war with the Lamb, and the Lamb overcoming him (Revelation 17:14), which is, as Antichrist is elsewhere described to be, destroyed with "the brightness of His coming." And as if to remove all doubt of that identity, the destruction itself is described in the third passage alluded to (Revelation 19:19), where the beast encounters the Rider on the white horse Whose Name is declared to be "The Word of God"■the chronology being again fixed by the millennial reign immediately succeeding. In 2 Thessalonians, Antichrist is called the "man of sin," as he is also in one of the passages already quoted (Isaiah 14:16), a "man." "Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake the kingdoms?" And he is also shown to be "a man" in Revelation 13:18, his number there (whatever it may be) "being the number of a man." This he must be to be the king of Babylon as we have seen he is, and his being so distinctly declared to be a man shows there is no absurdity in supposing he will be also a king according to the name so given him in Scripture. Besides these, there are various other names employed there also designating an individual, which on examining the context, will be seen to apply to none but him. They are apparently used to express one or other of the characteristics of "the lawless one," and do show him accordingly always in remarkable antagonism, as might be expected, to the characteristics of Him Whom he tries to supplant and overcome.

Thus in Zechariah 11:17, he is called the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock, in contrast to the Good Shepherd Who giveth His life for the sheep (John 10:11). The man of (or from) the earth (Psalms 10:18), in contrast to the Second Man Who is the Lord from heaven (1 Corinthians 15:47). The vile person (Daniel 11:21), to contrast with Him, Whom an unclean spirit even recognized as "the Holy One of God" (Mark 1:24). The oppressor (Isaiah 14:4), in contrast to the Deliverer Who shall come out of Zion (Romans 11:26). The little horn (Daniel 8:9), in contrast to Him of Whom it is said "In My Name shall his horn be exalted" (Psalms 89:24). The destroyer of the Gentiles (Jeremiah 4:7), in contrast to Him in Whom shall the Gentiles trust (Romans 15:12). Lucifer fallen from heaven (Isaiah 14:12), in contrast to Him Who is "the Bright and Morning Star" (Revelation 22:16). The terrible one (Isaiah 29:20), in contrast to the Lamb of God Which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29). The son of wickedness (Psalms 89:22), in contrast to the Son of God (Mark 1:1).

Surely no one on reflection can fail to be struck with the individuality indicated by each and all of these passages, which show the personality of Antichrist in as strong language as the personality of our blessed Lord Himself. The object however at present in making these references, is to

exhibit not his personality alone, but how the different names all point to and imply one great and the same individual. If successful in this, the destruction of the Antichrist, which is the point now immediately to be considered, will be easily shown as will be the harmony of all the passages which speak of it as falling upon him under these different names and designations. In the metaphorical system still followed by a large and influential class of interpreters, the thought of amelioration is constantly encouraged by what is made out of a gradual drying up of evil towards the end, by the advance and progress of Scripture truth which "Christ■s coming" is declared to mean. The pope, at all hazards, is still held to be the "man of sin," and this has contributed greatly to the maintenance of this error, for his unsteady career and present decrepitude encourage the thought they cling to of a gradual disappearance, however he may, from time to time, still rise or sink. But surely no thinking inquirer can read the many passages which have been already referred to without seeing that increasing confusion and increasing evil with a sudden tremendous termination, in which an individual man, who had been exalted and was exalting himself in the midst of it, is signally and fearfully destroyed, is really what Scripture language indicates, if words are to mean any thing at all.

"The Antichrist" has all along, in what has been said, been regarded here as this individual, and is seen "before that great and terrible day of the Lord" distinctly denying (which no pope has ever done), the Father as well as the Son (1 John 2:22), or as elsewhere expressed, exalting "himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4). He it is "whom the Lord shall consume (destroy) . . . with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thessalonians 2:8), a coming which so far from being a gradual coming, is constantly and invariably spoken of as sudden, "as a thief in the night" (1 Thessalonians 5:2), as the lightning that "cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:27). When the risen Saviour left this world, it was whilst He blessed them and as His disciples beheld that "He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). This surely was "sudden." And if so, His return will be in the same fashion, for the angels that stood by as His disciples were gazing after Him into heaven, declared "that this same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

Let us remember that Christ had then been visibly as well as tangibly with them after His resurrection for Thomas had been told to thrust his hand into His side, and it was therefore in His body, in which He bore "the print of the nails" that He ascended. It is "in like manner" that that same Jesus shall come again in the clouds, though now "with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30). It does seem indeed strange presumption to declare that a coming, so spoken of, can mean nothing more than a spiritual and gradual one, and that the destruction of the man of sin by it is only a slow consumption of the papacy by the substitution of Scripture truth in its stead. When Christ comes, every eye shall see Him, and they that pierced Him shall mourn. But if by "the extension of truth" His coming is already taking place, alas! who are seeing Him? Surely it is high time for Christians to rouse up and investigate Scripture for themselves, and to cease from listening to those who would (perhaps unconsciously) turn its plainest warnings and declarations into anything or nothing.

If in the apostle■s day it could be said that "the night is far spent, the day is at hand" (Romans 13:12), how near may, or rather must, that day be to us! And how ought men to be marking its

description by the sure word of prophecy in all its particulars, instead of giving ear to those who are flattering themselves and others with the vain thought of a peaceful surrender of his dominion by Satan who is now "the prince of it," and a gradual advance of better things.

Hear how differently both prophet and apostle speak of the termination, if their emphatic language is good to express any thing. "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My Holy Mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand! A day . . . of clouds and of thick darkness . . . a great people and a strong (the beast and the kings of the earth■Revelation 19:19); there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be . . . even to the years of many generations" (Joel 2:1-2).

It is gravely asserted that all this is past already, having had its accomplishment at the destruction of Jerusalem. If so, what cruel mockery must her children be thinking the words of the prophet to have been, for surely their floors are not filled with wheat nor their vats with wine (Joel 2:24) nor have they ceased yet to be a reproach among the heathen (v. 19). Must not they to whom Joel prophesied be thinking such predicted blessedness can only mean something still to be, even should they be overlooking "the day of darkness" and terror which is to introduce it? Of "that great and terrible day" we have another prophet saying, "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! To what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness and not light . . . even very dark, and no brightness in it" (Amos 5:18-20).

Another, "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it" (Isaiah 13:9).

Another, "The great day of the Lord is near . . . and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord; the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness" (Zephaniah 1:14-15).

Again, in the New Testament in perfect harmony, as ever, with the Old, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth (land) mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:29-30). It is clearly at that "coming" that the man of sin, the son of perdition of whom we have been speaking is destroyed, for Christ comes but "once again" when He is to "reign for ever and ever."

"Shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8) will in that day be found to have been a question full of significant meaning, for Antichrist will then be exalted and all the earth wondering after him, nay, even worshipping the devil who had given him the power they see him exerting (Revelation 13:4). Is this the gradual amelioration, in the thought of which men are already beginning to enter into the delusion of mistaking evil for good, which will result in an "apostasy" from truth altogether?

We are apt to lose sight of what is said of the "deceivableness of unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:10) in which Antichrist comes, and of which already, if Scripture warning was regarded, we might be seeing the "workings," although never was outward decency drawing a thicker veil than now over the hidden things of dishonesty and darkness. Men would be shocked and society call out against it were the grossness of bygone times to revive in these days. The tide

of feeling is in another direction and perhaps towards greater refinement and elegance. But let us not blind ourselves to the declared results in which all this is to end. "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" The parable of the tares and the wheat in Matthew 13:1-58 might surely forbid the thought of this gradual amelioration, for they flourish together till the end of the harvest which is explained to be "the end of the world" (age), when they are to be gathered out. And Isaiah confirms this by telling us (Isaiah 26:9) that it will be by God■s judgments and not by man■s efforts, that the world will even then be converted. For it is "when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."

What the day of grace then had failed, through man■s perverseness, to accomplish, the day of judgment will, that day meaning here the coming of the Lord to judge the world in righteousness. The distinctness of all Holy Scripture as to "that day" is as remarkable as the attempts being made to reduce the warning to nothing by spiritualizing (which is not spiritual! ■Ed.) the plainest declarations of what will then be seen■As in the days of Noah, in spite of his preaching, men "knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:39). And the same was it with our Lord■s first coming, in the face of what prophets had spoken with perfect literality as the event itself proved, of the circumstances in which that "coming" was to take place. People perplex what is said by allowing themselves to be persuaded that the coming of the Lord to destroy Antichrist, is merely another expression for the final judgment, which all tell us they are assured of, whether prepared for it or not. But they will not see that events occur after the coming of our Lord which show that the end of all evil is not to be even at that time, and that therefore the final judgment which terminates all, must be future to it, for the devil himself, the great deceiver, is let loose a thousand years after Antichrist and his army has been consumed by His coming, when he gathers again a fearful confederacy before he himself, with Death and Hades (the last enemy), are cast into Gehenna (Revelation 20:1-15). The terrible day of Christ■s coming to destroy Antichrist and terminate his day as well as his tribulation, will have therefore long preceded the final judgment, and it is for Antichrist and the tribulation, and the apostasy he triumphs in, that the church is so strongly warned in all Scripture to be prepared even now.

Surely if these things are so, it is for every Christian to be watching and looking well to Scripture, for Christ■s day will be ushered in by a time of "great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning," and which His glorious appearing alone will terminate. It is especially needful too, to think well of the "deceivableness" spoken of, and to be on our guard against a more open "working of Satan" who in introducing his Antichrist will aid him with all "signs and lying wonders" to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect (Mark 13:22). This could only have been written for their warning, for "none of the wicked shall understand" (Daniel 12:10). And if so, how amazing the slowness exhibited by Christians in giving heed to a message so distinctly delivered.

It is "in the last end of the indignation . . . and when the transgressors are come to the full" (Daniel 8:19-23) that the spirit of Antichrist which is already in the world (1 John 4:3), is to be embodied in a man, like ourselves, and to him the devil will give "his power and great authority." He it is who will distinctly as a man, try to exalt himself, with that help, above all that is called God or is worshipped, denying the Father and the Son, even as the spirit that will be in him has been from the beginning a denial of the other Person in the Blessed Trinity. And under man, so manifested and emancipated from all control by the permitted energy of Satan, will be seen what a world is, in

which the God that made it, the Son that redeemed it, and the Spirit that sanctified it, are all at once and altogether disowned and insulted. Mercifully, God will shorten those days else, as He Himself has told us, no flesh should be saved (Matthew 24:22).

How distinctly may Habakkuk be seen on his watch-tower, looking out for the fulfillment of the vision he had seen, and which he knew at the appointed time was to speak in "the end" (Habakkuk 2:1-3). And who can miss seeing that the vision itself, which is given (Habakkuk 1:5-12) did distinctly intimate not only the tribulation "terrible and dreadful," but that one should be over it offending, and "imputing his power unto his god"■that god being, as we are told elsewhere, the devil (Revelation 13:4)? In the description given, Antichrist is seen in connection with the Chaldeans, in respect to his being "king of Babylon." Judgment and dignity proceeding of themselves (Habakkuk 1:7), marking the lawless one who does according to his will■"the east wind" (Habakkuk 1:9), an emblem of blight and desolation following his steps. Scoffing at all kings (Habakkuk 1:10), who are sunk in his being exalted above all. His mind changing, passing over and offending (Habakkuk 1:11) refer to his breaking (in the midst of the week) the covenant so often referred to already (Daniel 9:27)■see also Psalms 55:20-23 in contrast with Psalms 89:34. This is followed by the astonishment of the prophet that the Everlasting and Holy One should permit such terrible wickedness and misery.

How marvelously does Habakkuk afterward enlarge the description of him in Habakkuk 1:1-20, and dwell in Habakkuk 3:1-19 upon "the coming," by which Antichrist and his followers are to be destroyed, when as if to close all, and himself being in full preparedness for the confusion and terror seen to be coming, this man of God so "throughly furnished" could, in the failure of all things, rejoice still in the Lord and joy in the God of his salvation (Habakkuk 3:18). Nor is the support given to his faith less apparent, for he exclaims, "God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds■ feet"■an animal, as we know, fitted to walk safely in dangerous high places where others would stumble and be destroyed.

Intimation of the same may be noticed in Malachi also, where the "coming of the Lord," as a refiner and purifier, is distinctly seen to "cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar" (Malachi 2:12). "But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?" (Malachi 3:2). Yet following immediately, as may be constantly observed in all Scripture when that trouble is past, is a comforting assurance, "then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years" (Malachi 3:4).

Joel, too, is full of striking allusions to the tribulation, which must be the same so often referred to for it ceases only "in the terrible day of the Lord," when the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood (Joel 2:31), and when immediately after, the deliverance of Mount Zion and Jerusalem is seen and the bringing again the captivity. "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the Hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel" (Joel 3:16). The desolators had been spoken of previously (Joel 1:6), which surely describes Antichrist with the kings confederated with him (here spoken of as "one nation") for God had put it "in their hearts . . . to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast," until His purposes are fulfilled (Revelation 17:17). "For a nation is come up upon My land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion" (Joel 1:6). In Revelation 13:2, the description of him to whom the devil

gives his power, is that he had "the mouth of a lion" and here is similarly described with similar outrage, as in that chapter of Revelation above referred to.

"He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white" (Joel 1:7). And that all this does really, without fancy, apply to Antichrist is proved by the chronology so often already noticed, the destruction being again in "the day of the Lord." "Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction (fire) from the Almighty shall it come. Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God?" (Joel 1:15-16). In Hosea, too, the warnings of coming wrath are mixed with promises of mercy and conversion■when "He shall roar . . . the children shall tremble . . . they shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria" (Hosea 11:10-11). How true will these words sound to Israel in that day, "I gave thee a king in Mine anger, and took him away in My wrath" (Hosea 13:11). "I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon" (Hosea 14:5)!

Amos has also, like the rest, a sight of the trouble as well as of the future blessing when the trouble is over and gone. "The Lord God of hosts is He that toucheth the land, and it shall melt, and all that dwell therein shall mourn: and it shall rise up wholly like a flood; and shall be drowned, as the flood of Egypt" (Amos 9:5). "All the sinners of My people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us. In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen" (Amos 9:10-11). An objection is sometimes made that by dwelling so much on an Antichrist that is future, we may become less sensitive than we ought to be to the many antichrists that are already in the world. But such an objection will cease to be thought of when we come to see that what is to be fully developed then, is just what we are to strive and watch against now, that watching and striving being quickened the more when we see whither the present tendency of all things is conducting, instead of deceiving ourselves with false ideas of the world, with some removable evils, being in progress towards amendment. And although the thought that the pope is the man of sin has to be surrendered, why should this make us less alive to the real mischief of the papacy when we see, more than ever perhaps, how largely it is contributing by its "vain traditions and doctrines of devils," to hasten what we are now taught to believe will be an apostasy yet more dishonoring to God, and fearful in its consequences to man?

"The coming of the Lord" is what the apostles taught to be the hope of Christ■s people, and this they would pray and long for more earnestly if they would only see how much Scripture says of the increasing antichristianism which is to prevail and prosper, until checked and destroyed by His appearing. Such would assuredly be the case if we were not fixing our eyes so resolutely on the papacy, and fancying that were it to fall, all would be well whilst error with which the papacy has nothing to do, and which, in fact, ignores the papacy like everything else, is all the while springing up and threatening the total rejection of the Bible itself as a rule of life, or even as a thing to be believed.

If evil is coming, it is scarcely less dangerous to be looking for it in a wrong direction than not to be looking for it at all. And if Scripture tells us where it is to be, it is purely presumptuous for any among us to be thinking we may do very well without the warning.

If we long, as we ought to do, for the destruction of all evil and the admission of the saints, whether alive or dead into an enjoyment with us of the blessedness which is to follow the sorrow and

confusion of the present, how is it we do not pray with greater desire that "Thy kingdom come"? A consummation however will not be till the tribulation is past, and Antichrist himself destroyed by Christ at His appearing and kingdom.

We are told Christians ought to feel satisfied if individually they are safe and taken to be with Christ. But this is losing sight of the collective and increased blessing which will be when "the dead in Christ" in their glorified bodies (now lying in dishonor), shall be raised and "caught up to meet Him" and each other, and when they who are alive and remain shall be changed to be their fitting companions. Paul thought to depart and be with Christ was far better, but his longing, as may be seen, was not to "be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality (the earthly house) might be swallowed up of life" (2 Corinthians 5:4); with this express condition however, if so be that when Christ appears, Who is our life, and in Whom it is now hid, we being already clothed in His righteousness, shall not be found naked, but ready to meet Him in the air, in our bodies, which are then to be raised in incorruption. The whole creation, laboring and groaning, is said to be waiting for this manifestation of the "sons of God," and yet, are they themselves alone of all creation to be insensible to the glory, and careless of the reunion, which is awaiting and only delayed till the mystery has been finished in the revelation and destruction of the Antichrist himself? He is yet, if Scripture words mean anything, to appear in an apostasy, more dangerous to the church in its deceivableness as well as oppression, than any trial that has yet been encountered. The nature and urgency of the crisis may be judged by the array brought forth to meet it. "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns . . . And the armies which were in heaven followed Him . . . And He hath on His thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords" (Revelation 19:11-16). It is He Who encounters the beast and his armies and destroys them with the brightness of His coming. The head of wickedness (see Genesis 3:15) in the height of his rebellion is met and crushed by "the Seed of the woman," Who is also the Lord from heaven. Is it possible that the church can any longer remain in such indifference as to the promised deliverance, which extends not only to those of its members who are to be "alive and remain" at that day, but to the loved ones who are asleep and whom Christ will bring with Him? Of their yearnings we seem actually to catch an echo, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled" (Revelation 6:10-11). In the passages of Scripture which relate to the destruction of Antichrist, the various modes of expressing it are all in harmony with each other, and all agree in distinctly showing it to be accomplished by superhuman agency. The great fact itself is plainly proclaimed in the verses of 2 Thessalonians, so often referred to already■consumed by the spirit (breath) of His mouth and destroyed by the brightness of His coming■and all other mention will be found pointing to such a destruction as well as such a Destroyer. In Daniel he is "broken without hand" (Daniel 8:25). In another passage (Daniel 9:27), which is more intelligibly translated in the margin than in the text, the allusion is first to his setting up his abomination and then to his destruction. "In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and upon the battlements (or pinnacle, for it is the same word as is used to designate the pinnacle of the temple) shall be the idols of the desolator, and he shall make desolate, even until the consummation and that determined shall be poured upon the

desolator," meaning himself. In another (Daniel 11:45), "he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain (Zion); yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him." In Isaiah 10:1-34, also already referred to, Antichrist under his name of "the Assyrian" is seen with his apostate confederacy in his daring attempt to possess himself altogether of "Zion, the hill of Jerusalem" (Isaiah 10:32). He shall "remain at Nob that day"■it is his last■for "behold the Lord, the Lord of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror . . . and Lebanon shall fall by a Mighty One" (Isaiah 10:33-34). "The Assyrian" perishes "in My land, and upon My mountains" is trodden under foot (Isaiah 14:25), thus marking, with all other Scripture, that Antichrist falls in the land of Israel. In Isaiah it is further written (Isaiah 11:4), "with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked (one)," the instrument there being (as may be seen) Christ, the Branch out of the roots of Jesse, Who at that day stands up for "an ensign of the people" (Isaiah 11:10) and to "assemble the outcasts of Israel" (Isaiah 11:12), just as we see He does under another name* in Daniel 12:1, where at the same terrible emergence, Michael, the Great Prince standeth up "for the children of Thy people."

*(We wonder if Mr. Bonar is right in identifying the Son of God with the Archangel Michael. Mr. B. W. Newton helpfully comments "Michael the archangel is unquestionably an angel and not the Lord. It would not be said of the Lord Christ, as it is of Michael, that he durst not bring a railing accusation against Satan, but said, the Lord rebuke thee. Besides which, a comparison of Peter and Jude clearly shows that they are both speaking of the same circumstances; and Peter expressly ascribes to angels what Jude ascribes to Michael. Compare 2 Peter 2:10-12 with Jude 1:8-10, observing the identity of the expressions in the Greek". We would add that the description of Michael as "one of the chief princes" in Daniel 10:13 would not be befitting of the Lord■Ed.).

Psalms 76:1-12 is one of thanksgiving for that great deliverance so wondrously accomplished, with mention also of the locality in which it is wrought, for God is seen in it to have caused His "judgment to be heard from heaven," when He arose "to save all the meek of the earth" (Psalms 76:8-9). Jerusalem in that day will have become "a joy and her people a praise," and this psalm, among others, will then be sung there with a fullness of meaning, which faith in promises existing can alone now justify or appropriate when all remains so unlike to what it speaks of■"In Judah is God known: His Name is great in Israel. In Salem also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling place in Zion. There (that is, the places just named) brake He the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle." It is added,■"Thou art more glorious ... than the mountains of prey," alluding to Christ■the Stone which had fallen on the image■having become then a "great mountain to fill the whole earth," displacing the robbers who had usurped His authority■ "the stout hearted" will then have been "spoiled" (Psalms 76:1-5).

Another passage in Isaiah (Isaiah 30:33) also describes the destruction to be in Judea, for Tophet is in the valley of the son of Hinnom (Jeremiah 7:31) close to Jerusalem, the south wall crossing over Mount Zion with this valley at its foot, while the adjacent eastern wall runs across the brow of Mount Moriah above the valley of Jehoshaphat. This it is to which Joel alludes (Joel 3:12) for, though the gathering of the apostate nations under Antichrist is to be at Armageddon, the battle and destruction is to be in that "valley of decision" (Joel 3:14) where God will "judge all the heathen round about." It is well known that in the wall over the valley where this is to be, the Turks point to a small projecting stone on which their Antichrist Mahomet, as it is believed by them, will sit when the world is to be assembled for judgment below. This is in accordance with all that the

spirit of Antichrist has ever been attempting to do since the beginning as he will to the end, in placing the false where the True is yet to be. But the crisis of all this is to be decided there under the very walls which are yet to be salvation and its gates praise (Isaiah 60:18) "for Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood: the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it."

It is vain to say, as some do, that this was spoken of Sennacherib,* inasmuch as he did not perish there, although his army did. We know from good authority that he returned and dwelt at Nineveh, and was slain in the house of Nisroch his god (Isaiah 37:37-38).

*(Sennacherib, like Saul, was a remarkable type of Antichrist, as will be seen more distinctly if we examine the answer God gave to Hezekiah■s prayer against him (Isaiah 37:21), for although that "king of Assyria" was overthrown in his attempt on Jerusalem, yet there will be noticed a distinct declaration of events connected with it, which did not at that time have any full accomplishment■What is said of the remnant (Isaiah 37:31) that escape of the house of Judah, taking root downward and bearing fruit upward, must allude to what is to be at the great deliverance yet future, when Jerusalem is to be "safely inhabited" after the last "Assyrian king," like the other has been overthrown, for God is pledged to "defend Jerusalem" against which "the Assyrian" will yet come (Isaiah 10:5-32), "for Mine Own sake" Isaiah 37:35, "and for My servant David■s sake"). Nor can it refer to Satan, as Lowth imagines, for when his time arrives he is to be cast into the lake of fire where "the Assyrian" and his prophet will already be. It is manifestly spoken of Antichrist destroyed, as will be seen (Isaiah 30:30) by the Lord■s coming, and causing "His glorious voice to be heard," and showing "the lighting down of His arm."

Psalms 18:1-50 was spoken by the literal David, as is intimated, "in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand . . . of Saul," who we have seen was a type of Antichrist. It will be a song of praise for a greater than David, when all Christ■s enemies, including the anti-type himself, are under His feet, for it is evident the deliverance there spoken of, could not have applied in full to the literal David, except as a figure of Him Who was to come. "The bowing of the heavens," "the coming down," "the brightness that was before him" (Psalms 18:9-12) all indicate that it was the great enemy of Christ, described as "the violent man" (Psalms 18:48), who had been then destroyed by the "fire out of His mouth" (Psalms 18:8). "Therefore will I give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praises unto Thy Name" (Psalms 18:49).

How wondrous to see in all this, Christ the true David giving thanks, for Himself and the people with whom He identifies Himself, to his Father in Whose Name He had come. "It is God that girdeth Me with strength" (Psalms 18:32); "Thou hast enlarged My steps" (Psalms 18:36), "Thou hast also given Me" (Psalms 18:40), "Thou hast delivered Me" (Psalms 18:43 and Psalms 18:48), Thou hast avenged Me (Psalms 18:47), "Thou liftest Me up" (Psalms 18:48), etc. What an exhibition of the love which could have brought Him from the glory He had with the Father, and take our nature upon Him and exalt it again to be heir with Him Who is the Heir of all things! Surely, love like this might make us long to see the kingdom He has purchased, and in which we are to reign with Him for ever and ever. In Isaiah 14:1-32, much will be found which can alone apply to Antichrist, for it is on his destruction that the "earth is at rest" (Isaiah 14:7) under its rightful King, after the storm that will then have passed over it. "Is this the man that made the earth to tremble?" can be none other than Babylon■s Antichrist king, distinctly a man, and so spoken of in

subsequent verses, "all the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one (of them) in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcass trodden under foot. Thou shalt not be joined with (to) them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people" (Isaiah 14:18-20).

All this agrees with what is said in Revelation 19:20, "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast . . . These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

How much is the terrible character of all this in unison with the daring wickedness that will have provoked it. The firmness of the impostor is supernaturally supported to the last. Upon his heart, seared as with a hot iron, no dew of repentance is seen to descend. In that terrible hour he justifies the selection Satan had made of him, as, in undismayed presumption he hurries both himself and "the kings of the earth and their armies" against "the city of the Great King," Who is Himself coming to meet him in the clouds of heaven and with all the accompaniments of Deity!

It was at the thought of that encounter that Habakkuk trembled, and of which Enoch, the seventh from Adam, heard the shoutings, exulting at the same time to proclaim the issue, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (Jude 1:14-15).

If the reign of Antichrist, so fearfully terminated, will have been marked by such terror and tribulation as to have made men seek death without finding it (Revelation 9:6), what thought can imagine the joy and gladness of creation on that "morning without clouds" which follows when the storm will have passed away into the "clear shining after the rain"! What a scene will this freshened earth exhibit, reposing in the tranquillity of a reign of righteousness which comes at once upon the turmoil and anguish and blasphemy beneath which it had groaned under Satan and his antichrist king! "The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, since thou (Antichrist) art laid down, no feller is come up against us" (Isaiah 14:7-8).

It is impossible for a believer in that coming blessedness not to feel refreshed and invigorated by the very thought, and to wish to linger and linger still amidst the green pastures and still waters of comfort which its promise supplies. They restore the soul and make it to feel, with the way-worn psalmist of old, that a table has been prepared in the presence of its enemies. "Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever" (Psalms 23:5-6)! An objection has been taken by many in our day to the study of prophecy, as being of little practical benefit. That there should be any ground for such a charge can arise solely from its having been misconducted, for it seems impossible that any one on reflection should think that so much of Scripture could be occupied with anything that really was useless or unprofitable. In fact, however, the chief effort of writers on prophecy seems to have been now-a-days, to prove the truth of Scripture itself, not from its own, but from the pages of Gibbon, or Volney, or some such recorder of past events, which their system declares the prophecy to have previously indicated. In their fashion of accounting for it, nearly the whole of the Revelation has been accomplished. The pope, as the Antichrist, has nearly had his

day and little remains in fact now to be arrived at but the probable year in which the dispensation will close, and the millennium, for which the world is so ripe, be expected to begin, if indeed it has not done so already.

Now this is really idleness, if it be no worse, for besides this mistake as to the times of the end, prophecy was given neither to gratify curiosity, nor to prove the general truth of Scripture. It was the doctrine on which its claims to inspiration chiefly rested. Our Lord Himself declares it to be so, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God" etc. (John 7:16-17).

If a writer like Mr. Elliott (author of "Horae Apocalypticae" - see "The Prophetic System of Mr. Elliott and Dr. Cumming considered" in "Aids to Prophetic Enquiry" by Mr. B. W. Newton■Ed.) labors to prove the truth of Scripture from the two witnesses having appeared in Luther■s time in exact fulfillment of its prediction, is there no risk of the ridicule of the scoffer being excited by such a conclusion as few, even among his own followers, are at all satisfied with, or even inclined to believe? The attempt therefore is more likely to prejudice than to advance its object, and to such things, it is to be feared, may be attributed the strange indifference observable now among Christians themselves to prophecy, scarcely however to be wondered at, if men of such talent and research can draw nothing more practical, or even likely to be believed, out of it than this. The very erudition required to support such a system as his is against the probability of its being true, for what becomes of the poor man with his Bible for his companion, if such extended literary research is required to make him understand what it means, and how its prophecies have been accomplished as he is assured they have been? And even if true, what benefit is it to him, if he was previously satisfied that the Bible was indeed God■s Word, without all this labour to prove it so from statements he has no means of verifying?

He sees a distinct mention of the last days, and from his Bible written in the plainest and most intelligible language, believes we are entering upon them; and he reads there of the sure word of prophecy being a lamp in a dark place, to which it is well to give heed. Surely it is not what took place in the days of Constantine that can satisfy such as him, for he is told to "press forward" and it is in that direction he naturally expects the lamp to cast its light.

If warned of "perilous times" to come, surely he will seek to know the dangers there are to be in them, and not rest satisfied with being told what the General Councils of the Romish Church either said or did, hundreds of years ago.

What is it practically to him that there should be some who think the rider on the white horse "who goeth forth conquering and to conquer" to have been a Cretan, because he had a bow and Cretans had bows, or that the symbolic horsemen in Revelation 9:1-21 were Turks, from the mention of their power being in their tails, and horse-tails were the standard of the Turcomans?

He is told in his Bible of "a deceivableness of unrighteousness" with a coming that is to be "after the working of Satan," and he thinks of the light in a dark place, to which he has been told he would do well to take heed. But how can he feel satisfied in listening to such "tales of the past" as he can in no way connect himself with, even if he could understand, or remember, or believe them to have been the fulfillment of what his Bible had been telling him?

Zechariah, 500 years before the event, had told his people, "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zechariah 9:9). Yet their fancy revolted at such a humiliating advent, however literal the event afterwards proved it to have been. And yet, in the face of the warning, every book is now searched, but the Bible itself, to furnish accomplishments, whilst the scoffers at the promise of His coming again "in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11), are scarcely to be distinguished from those, who, professing to believe and make others understand, are yet themselves scandalized at the thought that any but a spiritual return can possibly be intended, or that the man of sin means anything but a succession of popes, of whom it is now hoped from their calculations, we have seen nearly the last.

All this of itself is enough to repel men from the sure word of prophecy in absolute despair of finding anything sure or practical in it, whilst all the while, instead of traces of right triumphing over wrong, the most superficial observer may see that the reverse is the case, and that opinions subversive of the sure word of truth itself, are spreading with fearful rapidity. The weekly issue of impure and irreligious publications in the Metropolis alone is, of itself, enough to create some doubts as to whether the world we live in will come out of the dispensation men are agreed in thinking to be drawing to a close, in so spiritual and peaceable a termination as our learned are trying to make us believe. In fact, no thinking man does believe this, or that the pope can be either the only or even the greatest Antichrist we are to see.

Let the literality of Scripture but be freed from the fancies which have been woven into it, and again it will be found a practical guide as well as comforter, amidst the increasing darkness, and the evil that is yet to be, before the delusion is broken by that coming in the clouds of heaven, which every eye shall see, and about which there will be no mistake, "for as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:27). From the explanation given of the seals, trumpets, and vials, and how their effects have been seen in the world, it is attempted to make us believe, against, as it would seem, to express Scripture, that God has already been reckoning with it in judgment instead of "waiting to be gracious," still causing His sun to shine and His rain to fall "on the just and on the unjust." How a day of wrath could consist with such a day of grace in which "God is not imputing trespasses," might have led any one to pause and ask, what if these judgments are yet to be?

If Scripture, as it is alleged, does speak of an Antichrist to be seen and of a worshipping of the devil under him, may it not happen that when the Son is denied, as it is at that time said He is to be, together with the Father, the effect will be shown by plagues then as typified by what fell on Egypt of old? Admit, even for argument■s sake, that this is possible, and Christians will soon discover how deeply they are concerned in the sure word of prophecy as pointing to what is still future, instead of in Gibbon to tell them it is all past.

It is by Scripture light alone, as shining in a dark place, that they will see to what all things are rapidly tending, with, at the same time, a comforting assurance that amidst the crash, God■s faithfulness and promises will not only stand secure, but that He has cared for them with a Father■s tenderness in having told His people before (Matthew 24:25) of what might well have shaken, if not overthrown their faith altogether, had it come upon them unawares," as it will upon all the world.

They will be saying Peace, peace, when there cometh sudden destruction from which they shall not escape.

01.05. Conclusion

Development of Antichrist

Conclusion

There would be no conclusion to draw from all this were it true, as is so frequently insinuated, that prophecy is of no private interpretation as far as our own individual interests are concerned. There may undoubtedly be a risk not alone of neglecting, but also on the other hand of giving it an undue prominence. Nevertheless between these extremes let us bear in mind, that as "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" and declared to be "profitable," so it must be to our risk and damage if we overlook the proper place and importance of each and every portion of it. Our wish has been to vindicate the study of what many a Christian, from one motive or another, seems to shun, for in the persuasion of coming disorder and "perplexity," the lamp in the dark place spoken of is, by mention, the "sure word of prophecy," to which it is added "ye do well that ye take heed" (2 Peter 1:19).

Now if Scripture declares this, who is to forbid us saying that throughout a distinct warning is given■a telling before (Matthew 24:25) ■of events yet to come in which individually we are all concerned? "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say," and whether there is not reason for asking why Scripture language, after all past lessons, is not to be taken literally in every instance where the context does not manifestly and unmistakably show it to be metaphorical. The rule laid down is not one of difficult application if we attempt to apply it honestly, and not with a mere wish to cavil and find fault where it becomes all to be humble as well as vigilant.

It is a sign of the times that the study of prophecy is talked of, at least more than it was, and if so, how deeply important that the theories regarding its interpretation should be examined with greater caution now, from the manifest failures of the past and the want of any real practical good having come out of it after we had expressly been encouraged to expect a different result. Does not such a failure of itself suggest the thought that the prevailing system may have been a wrong one, and that greater regard to the plain literality of Scripture would lead, as in its other teaching, to the profit which of necessity, from Scripture declaration itself, must be there? Timothy when warned of the perilous times of the last days, nearer to us now than they were to him, was directed (2 Timothy 3:14-15) for protection against deceiving or being deceived to the Holy Scriptures which he had known from a child. But how marked a departure must there be from the simplicity of that admonition, when we can sit quietly, year after year, listening to expositors who tell us of the allowance to be made for eastern phraseology and illustrative symbols, until in their hands, the plainest words which no "child" could mistake or stumble at, have become mystified if not wholly altered in their meaning.

Hence the whole way by which they have come, is strewed with abandoned assertions as one portion of the theory was shown to be inconsistent with the other, and as each succeeding writer still detected a new date or accomplishment which was found to fit more exactly even than

previous ones had done.

It may look like presumption to say all this, but the presumption disappears when all that is contended for in these imperfect remarks is simply that a greater regard, than all of us have been showing, is due to the inspired literality of that Scripture, which infidels and philosophers of the day are seeking to overthrow altogether. If prepared to say that Scripture truth alone must be our refuge in the days of evil and error which are darkening around us, surely it becomes us to be "very jealous" for its literality, and to count all other lights as false which come not from that place where alone the true light shineth, however men may sneer at our simplicity in thinking so.

There are, and will be increasingly, meteor lights sent forth by Satan to lead man astray till his feet stumble on the dark mountains, if he himself does not perish there. Let any one think to what the German mysticism, to which allusion has been already made in these pages, is leading, and of what the world without a Bible would be, before he yields a hair-breadth to the system which is turning much of the plainest language into metaphor. With our attention so plainly called to it, prophecy will be found no idle study to be dipped into or disregarded as suits our fancy, nor will it serve us to plead the confusion in which such widely different interpretations have involved it. This is only a good reason for more attention being given to the subject, and also for our asking why Scripture language should be differently construed from all other.

If it tells us of a revelation that is to be of "that man of sin ... the son of perdition" before the coming of our Lord Himself to destroy him, why should we be speaking of a succession of popes or principles any more than of a succession of Saviors and influences? Such discrepant interpretation is helping greatly the scoffers of these last days, who are already pointing to the inconsistencies of professed Bible Christians themselves, to show that their Book means anything or nothing, as they choose to make it, and is therefore unfit to guide man now that he is beginning to think for himself.

It is confessedly one of the characteristics of the last times that man■s restless energy is searching into everything human and divine. Knowledge of whatever kind it may be, is increased by the many that "run to and fro" (Daniel 12:4), an expression which in the Hebrew means properly to run through or examine (a writing). As to Daniel■s people, they make no attempt to understand his book, saying that he did not understand it himself and was even told that the words were "closed up and sealed" (verse 9). But they will not see, like many among ourselves, that this was only to be "till the time of the end," whilst we have what they had not, a book of Revelation shown to speak of the same events as Daniel had done, but which John, as distinctly, was commanded not to seal (Revelation 22:10) "for the time is at hand."

How strikingly ought this to warn us with all becoming reverence while searching the Scriptures, to give heed also to the sure word of prophecy in our eventful days as to a light shining in a dark place, and reflecting itself with increasing power from other Scripture which, we have seen, was to be sealed up and closed till now. But besides neglecting a duty, as we contend it is from Scripture declaration itself, how much are we also in the meanwhile losing of warning and comfort, if either we refuse altogether to look into the subject of prophecy, or cling still to the misleading system of interpretation unhappily prevailing, even although our judgment is unconvinced by it? There is no Scripture warrant for expecting a peaceful termination of present evil before the Lord comes, as literally and truly, as He was seen to go into heaven. His people in the world have yet to expect a

darker day than has appeared, and already are its presages unmistakably gathering in masses over them. The "light that shineth in a dark place" would increasingly vindicate to them, in such circumstances, the mercy that placed it there, were they not willfully perverting or obscuring it, as they are doing. It would be seen illumining the sable cloud of the future, making it to "turn out its silver lining on the night," with the light that is "behind it" reflected to God■s people, who are on their way beneath it, until the darkness itself was dispelled by "the morning appearing." The light of prophecy is light from that heaven where there is no darkness at all, and is in contrast to another light spoken of by our Lord himself, if "the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matthew 6:23).

Let us be warned that this is it which the philosophers, falsely so called, of the day would beguile us into choosing, and of which it becomes us to beware, for it is from beneath (from him who is the prince of darkness as well as the prince of this world), which has accordingly ever chosen the darkness rather than the light, its deeds, like his, being evil. And to what is all this "word of prophecy" pointing? Surely not alone to the trouble which is yet to be, but far more extendedly to the gladness that is beyond it, but of which our notions are and continue so low and earthly from want of heed to the sure word of prophecy.

If Antichrist is spoken of and the outbreak of sin and terror which will attend him, how do all the prophets seem to rejoice to be done with such details, and to escape from them into the glad tidings they are also commissioned to tell of "the glory that should follow"! Yet they who are to share in it seem content that things should go on as now, provided only the day of their death take them out of the trouble into a state which, after all, is still one of waiting "for the manifestation of the sons of God" (Romans 8:19). The whole creation is represented as groaning■ for this, nay, Christ Himself, although sat down on the right hand of God, as also "henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool" (Hebrews 10:13). Yet Christians continue indifferent, or rather averse, to look beyond the present state of things, into what Scripture prophets tell them of the future with a distinct intimation that they would "do well to give heed." Nay, it almost seems as if they were deliberately overlooking the fact of this mortal which is to put on immortality being now in weakness, corruption, and dishonour (1 Corinthians 15:42-43, 1 Corinthians 15:53). How is it they will not understand their interest in what is to be?

It is written, "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore" it is added, "comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18). Are we doing so? Are we thinking of this change as well as of the reunion that is to be at that moment when this corruptible is to put on incorruption (surely this is not spoken of the day of our death) and this mortal, immortality? If so, how strange all this indifference to the "coming of the Lord," which is not only to destroy existing evil and accomplish this change in us, but to bring back to us "them also which sleep in Jesus," possessed like us then, and not till then, of glorified bodies in which we shall recognize and welcome each other as fitting companions to be for ever "with the Lord."

Him, eye to eye we then shall see, Like His, our faces shine;

O, what a glorious company When saints and angels join!

What a contrast does the language, used by both prophet and apostle in reference to such a time of blessing, present to the indifference with which men hear of it now. "Thy dead shall live, My dead body (not "together with" which is not in the original, for believers themselves are that body, His Own having seen no corruption, Acts 2:3) shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead! Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the LORD cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain" (Isaiah 26:19-21).

It was to the expectation of such an "awakening," (then how distant!) that David is heard responding, "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness" (Psalms 17:15). And Job too, in times still more remote, "in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another: my reins within me (see margin) are consumed with earnest desire for that day" (Job 19:26-27). Is there no longing exhibited here for the day when they were to be so "satisfied"? Is death swallowed up in victory now, when its triumphs are intruded on us every hour by the mourners who go about the streets? And are we still indifferent to the time, when all this is to cease with us and with them whom we are committing to the dust? Or, as Christians, can we afford to treat, as a matter of indifference, that the inheritance which Christ purchased with His Blood is still under the dominion of another lord; and that, instead of an amelioration and turning to Him, there is to be "the apostasy" and Antichrist who is yet to exalt and oppose himself upon it above all that is called God or is worshipped?

What a narrowing of all the glorious expectations which His church has been encouraged in from the beginning, is it for us "upon whom the ends of the world are come," to be confining our hopes to a bare individual escape from present distress and weariness, with our bodies, which are Christ■s, left behind us in weakness and shame! How like a dishonored retreat from the battlefield were Antichrist and Satan to remain on it triumphant, and the earth upon which the Son of God had lived and suffered abandoned to the evil which had ruined it.

Surely this is not to be if Scripture■s plainest words mean anything at all. He, Who endured the cross, despising the shame, and is even now bringing many sons and daughters to glory, is under promise to "come again;" no longer as at the first, in suffering and humiliation, but in the clouds of heaven and His saints with Him. The places of the Redeemer■s sorrow are yet to be the places of the Redeemer■s triumph. His feet are yet to stand upon the Mount of Olives, the moon confounded and the sun ashamed, when He reigns in Jerusalem and in Mount Zion before His ancients gloriously (Isaiah 24:23).

How strange to think that they who are to share in that triumph should be cold and indifferent about it, and more taken up with the thought of escape from their individual "light affliction, which is but for a moment" (2 Corinthians 4:17), than with the hope of seeing realized the promise of "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13). When our Lord comes, His reign with His saints is to be a reign of righteousness in contrast to that of Antichrist, which had preceded and shall then have come to an end. And Satan, bound for a thousand years, will not be present to exert the power he now has to pervert and mislead. But the flesh which fell will still be

that of the inhabiters of the earth, and still exposed to sin again as if to show that in it "dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18). This is an undeniable fact, whatever our fancy of the millennium may be, for sin and death are both spoken of as in operation during its period (Isaiah 65:20; Jeremiah 31:29-30); and an outbreak at the end, when Satan having been loosed out of his prison (Revelation 20:7-8) will gather a number "as the sand" ready to join him in one further effort for preeminence, even as the first Adam, whose flesh they inherit, sinned and fell amidst the happiness of Eden, and in face to face intercourse with his Maker. The former attempt had been led on by Antichrist, but in this Satan appears for himself and his final overthrow, for the Great White Throne is set and he, along with "the rest of the dead" whose names are not found in the Lamb■s Book of Life, are judged, to be cast into the lake of fire, where Antichrist and his false prophet will already be, to be tormented for ever. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:26), and his destruction is recorded as following immediately after that of Satan as if to mark the conclusion. And here Scripture alone should speak, for these are solemn futurities: Christ "must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet ... And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:25, 1 Corinthians 15:28). That which is perfect will then, at last, have come and that which is imperfect be done away (1 Corinthians 13:10).

Every spot even where sin had rested or could rest "shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10), and "behold, I make all things new" (Revelation 21:1-27:5). What the glories of eternity will be to all God■s redeemed people we could not now conceive, for earthly things cannot measure heavenly. We read of one who was caught up into Paradise (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell), and "heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" yet "of such an one will I glory" (2 Corinthians 12:3-5).

Another in speaking of them says, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hat prepared for them that love Him" (see Isaiah 64:4). And as if to seal all by a last promise, a third is made to declare, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son" (Revelation 21:7).

It will remain a mystery to us till we know as we are known, why a holy God could permit evil to enter where His will was supreme. But this we know, that He Who is "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working" (Isaiah 28:29) doeth all things well. In His wondrous condescension to His people, He calls on them to prove Him, and how could this have been done, had nothing been permitted to ruffle or interrupt the tranquillity and order of His perfect dominion? A man■s character (with deep reverence be it spoken) is proved by the difficulties and trials to which he is subjected, and so God may have been showing, where sin abounded, how His grace could much more abound. May not this earth prove to have been the theatre selected by His wisdom to show, not only to us, but to beings incomprehensible to us now, who themselves never knew either sin or disorder, the full character of God on which all happiness depends, by a display of it in permitted events involving even the death of His Son? Is it not confusion which makes us understand the blessings of order, sickness of health, sorrow of gladness, and turmoil of rest? And may not the passage of their Great Head in union with His people through all these, have been appointed, not only to "make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery," but "to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord"

(Ephesians 3:9-11).

Yet how would that purpose have fallen short of its full display of power as well as of goodness, were the earth itself which God had created in the beginning and which He had pronounced to be very good, been abandoned to Satan as a polluted thing, after all the display of the wisdom and grace which had been witnessed upon it! But this is not to be so. "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17). "The redemption of the purchased possession" will yet be fully manifested when, as we have seen, the last enemy upon it having been destroyed, the Son Himself becomes subject, that God may be all in all.

Then, and not till then, will be known what that redemption so spoken of implied, as well as the wondrous ransom that was paid for it. It will be declared to men and to angels when the new heavens and the new earth are seen restored without spot or blemish, to God■s sinless dominion, and what is more, along with them the "many sons and daughters" whom He, the Captain of their salvation Himself made perfect through suffering, had been bringing out of the world to share in glory with Him, Who in that day will be shown to be "the Heir of all things."

He Who was, for our sins and for our transgressions, reviled and spit upon and crucified between two thieves, will then be highly exalted. "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied; by His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify (have justified) many; for He shall bear (bore) their iniquities" (Isaiah 53:11). The mystery will at last have been ended for ever, and He Who took our nature upon Him "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins and to bring in everlasting righteousness" (Daniel 9:24), will be shown to be the same that was in the beginning with God and by Whom all things were made, without Whom was not anything made that was made, Who was with God, and Who was God (John 1:1-3).

It needs that we understand something of the character of that tremendous wrath which descended on our great Sacrifice and which will yet devour every one who is not found washed in His Blood, before we are in any condition to judge aright of what is constituting the false glory of the natural man, and the real character of all that is within the gates of His city. Until brought to see this, we cannot have any true or proper desire "to go forth . . . without the camp, bearing His reproach;" and still less can we rejoice to have been, by free grace alone, thus called to come out and be separate from it. For where, alas, will he be found in that day who now lingers in these cities of the plain with the destruction that is impending over them, ashamed of the Saviour Who would have drawn him out of them, and up to Himself! Is it not written of such an one, "of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He shall come in His Own glory, and in His Father■s, and of the holy angels" (Luke 9:26)? And if the sure word of prophecy tells us, amidst present distress and weariness, of such a glory as this is to be, it is, whatever men may call it, a light shining in a dark place to which we do well to take heed. For it is not impossible to do so, without feeling within us the stirring of a hope that is full of immortality. Whilst we look at those things that are not seen, do not our hearts burn within us by the way, and seem lifted above the "heaviness" of the present, rejoicing in the thought that "the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18)?

Time, as it is now with us, is a human word, and the change associated with it an entirely human idea; so wrought into us however, that we dread monotony and the possibility of weariness where

there is no change. But this is simply because time is connected in our minds here with invariable decay, and therefore with the thought that were there no change, our very hopes as well as occupations would slip from underneath us. But when the eternal things spoken of are seen and there shall "be time no longer" (Revelation 10:6), neither shall there be any more decay, marking time■s progress as now, with its dark and sorrowful shadow. The former things will have passed away and we shall have a new measurement scarcely to be appreciated by us at present constituted, but how transporting then, when we ourselves are "changed," and like all things around us, made pure and holy, without decay and enduring as the ages of eternity. It is when personally sinless ourselves, and not till then, that we shall be able to recognize the blessedness of owning and bowing to one perfect and sovereign Will. Is not such a prospect fitted to animate Christ■s people with new strength to press onwards, by showing them the real dignity of their present condition, set forth as they are, as a spectacle to men and to angels? For are they not chosen out of a world, which is pluming itself on its advancing liberty, its discoveries, its intellect, its science, its powers and its pleasures for ages to come, to be "God■s witnesses" against all these, dedicated as they increasingly are, to the prince of this world, whose glory is and will be still more, in opposition to the Name of Jesus?

Like their Divine Master, they are despised and hated, not resisting evil nor trying to put right by force what they nevertheless protest to be wrong, and still contented in quiet submission to authorities and powers for the Lord■s sake to suffer with Christ, knowing they shall also reign with Him (2 Timothy 2:12). Their light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working out for them a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory; and the crown that is laid up for them will be found worthy of God, the Righteous Judge, Who is to place it on their heads at that day.

Such a view, too, of Christ and Antichrist as we have been considering, helps to make us understand the width and breadth of that great gulf which is fixed between the service of the one and the service of the other. There is no half-way■no compromise. Like that between the rich man and Lazarus, in one sense already "they which would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence" (Luke 16:26). Yet, in another sense, there is still an escape if men will hear Moses and the prophets■"the sure word of prophecy" ■but if not, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead. And such, with all the promises still attaching to them, would seem the present existing condition of God■s ancient people, the Jews. The veil is upon their eyes, and they cannot see what their own prophets have declared unto them. Nevertheless, God■s truth is pledged, and He will surely perform whatever He has promised them of earthly distinction and blessing. And yet, after all, they were but types of His true people, brought not alone out of Egypt, but out "of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues■a great multitude, which no man could number" (Revelation 7:9) bought with the precious Blood of His Son. The care which led and fed them in the wilderness is still shown to His own, whom He is bringing into a far nobler inheritance. The one might sing the song of Moses when delivered from Pharaoh, whilst the other will, ere long, join to it that of the Lamb, as they stand on a sea of glass, mingled with fire, having "gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name" (Revelation 15:2-3). The inheritance of the one is on earth. The inheritance of the other is in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. The Jerusalem that is below will be the joy of the whole earth, but it will be so in the light of the New Jerusalem from above, "which is free and the mother of us all" (Galatians 4:26), described as the "city which hath foundations,

whose Builder and Maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). The glory of the one will lighten the other during the millennial reign, and its bright inhabitants be the realization of what Jacob only dreamed of, "angels of God ascending and descending" on the earth (Genesis 28:12). Who that has an ear to hear, can after this be insensible to the true dignity of the sons of God, nor feel more than urged to walk worthy of his high calling, when in the "sure word of prophecy" he gathers something of what that calling is, and to what it is conducting him?

How perfect, too, is the consistency of all Scripture, proving it in the face of all the scoffers and all the critics of these evil days, to be indeed given by "inspiration of God"! He it is Who hides these things from the wise and prudent and has revealed them unto babes. "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (Matthew 11:26).

Gird up then, Christian, the loins of your mind; be sober and hope to the end. Even now, amidst the gathering darkness without, the "sure word of prophecy" which is indeed the light from the windows of your home, shines brighter and brighter as you approach unto it; and soon, as you touch its threshold, will come forth that gladdening reception, "Well done, good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" To close with a single inference from all that has been written in these imperfect pages. There are, and ever have been, but two principles in the world as will be seen plainly ere long■self and Christ. The one wholly evil and incapable of any amelioration or affinity with the other, as will be fully manifested in the approaching times of the Antichrist. It must, therefore, be utterly destroyed by that other, which is Christ; and when He comes to effect this, there will be peace in the world itself, and not until then.

Meanwhile, God■s discipline is now employed to convince us of this, and to show us what self is, as well as what Christ is. If the lesson is savingly learnt we cease to have any confidence in the one, and learn to lean simply and entirely on the other. Forthwith, the struggle within us is felt be ended, and we do enter into rest (Hebrews 4:3), expecting henceforth with Christ Himself till His foes and ours be made His footstool, when there will be outward tranquillity also.

Faith in this is "the victory that overcometh the world," even whilst we ourselves are still amidst its trials. No one ever thus knew himself and Christ without abhorring the one and cleaving to the other, for it is then he begins to learn that His yoke is indeed easy and His burden light (Matthew 11:30), even as that of the other was grievous to be borne. And if by the full display which is to be, of what "self" really is, and tends to, in the revelation when the transgressors are come to the full of Antichrist, as its development then in open opposition to Christ Himself, prophecy serves to show (as it has been our attempt to prove it really does show), the direct antagonism which, under all forms and disguises has been in action from the very beginning, is not its study cleared from the charge of being a vain intrusion into things not seen and with which properly the future alone should have been left to deal; whilst itself is vindicated to be light shining in a dark place to which we do well to take heed? But it will have been seen that it does far more even than this, for it declares the utter and terrible destruction of the one by the final and complete triumph of the other. Without the "sure word" how could such a termination have been assured to Christ■s people, left as they are in a world where the foundations "are out of course" (Psalms 82:5), and self ever seeking to be uppermost in themselves, as in all around them, to an extent which might have made the struggle absolutely wearisome, if not seemingly hopeless altogether?

It was inspiration alone which could have told, as it has done, how all this is to end, and that in language and minuteness of detail, well fitted to meet all present perplexity, as well as all alarm regarding the issue. Greater is He that is for us than all that can be against us, may henceforth be the exulting thought of all who are Christ■s, and who, as such, will share in that triumph which is approaching, as surely as is the Antichrist whom it is to destroy. And ought not this assurance, and the disclosures with which it is accompanied, to teach and enable us to receive at present every inward and outward trouble, every disappointment, pain, temptation, or desolation with actual cheerfulness and joy as an occasion for the overthrow of self, that we may enter more closely into fellowship with Him, Who was Himself "made perfect through suffering"?

True, the world is seen more distinctly to be sitting in darkness, but God has called us out of that darkness into His marvelous light, and we understand, therefore, how it is He bids His people to walk as children of the light and of the day, having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. What gladness to all such must be the thought that "the time is short"(1 Corinthians 7:29), till He Who cometh will come, and when all that opposes His kingdom within or without shall be gathered out of it for ever!

Let men forbid or scoff at the study of prophecy as they may, its real importance is becoming daily more plain and apparent, for already, thank God, are many increasingly led to understand why it is written, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Revelation 1:3).

Chapter 8

02.00. Gospel Pointing to Christ

BonarA GPPC: 00 Preface BonarA GPPC: 01 Statement of Fact that Person of Christ is essence of Glad Tidings BonarA GPPC: 02 Gospel from Fall to Day of Apostles, was found in Person of Saviour BonarA GPPC: 03 Help Afforded by Christ's Person to a Soul seeking to know sin and application of Salvation BonarA GPPC: 04 How looking to the Person of Christ tends to Promote Peace that Passes Understanding BonarA GPPC: 05 How looking to the Person tends to Advance Holiness in the Soul BonarA GPPC: 06 How this looking to Person affects our Views of Death and Our Hope of the Lord's Second Coming BonarA GPPC: 07 Appendix (Extracts from old Authors)

02.000. Preface

The Gospel pointing to the Person of Christ - Preface IN this new Edition no change of any importance has been made beyond the correction of errata, and extending the texts quoted. The object of the book is to draw more attention to the great subject of connecting at all times the Person of Christ with His work. This is a point which the experience of the most solid believers has testified to as of vast importance. Toplady quotes the following case from the diary of one who afterwards preached Christ, Mr.Thomas Cole. Listen to his interesting statement : - '" was convinced I could be saved no other way than by grace, if I could but find grace enough. But at that time I saw more in my own sin than in God’s mercy. But this put me on a further inquiry after the grace of God, because my life lay upon it: and then I was brought to the Gospel. When, however, I came to the Gospel, I met with the law in it; that is, I was for turning the Gospel into law. I began to settle myself upon Gospel-duties, such as repentance, humiliation, believing, praying; and (I know not how) I forgot the promise of grace which first brought me to the Gospel. Soon I found I could neither believe nor pray as the Gospel required. While I was in this plunge, it pleased the Lord to direct me to study the Person of Christ, whom I looked on as the great undertaker in the work of man’s salvation! And truly here I may say, as Paul did, ’It pleased God to reveal His Son in me.’ God overcame my heart with this. I saw so much mercy in His mercy, so much love in His love, so much grace in His grace, that I knew not what to liken it to. And here my heart broke, I knew not how! Before this faith came, I knew not how to secure myself against past, present, and future sins: but there was that largeness of grace, that all-sufficiency of mercy, that infinity of righteousness, discovered to me in Christ, that I found sufficient for all the days of my life."

GLASGOW, June, 1858.

02.01. Chapter 1

The Gospel pointing to the Person of Christ - Chapter 1 STATEMENT OF THE FACT THAT THE PERSON OF CHRIST IS THE ESSENCE OF THE GLAD TIDINGS. From the beginning, the Gospel has come to the awakened sinner with the same consciousness of important news to tell, as that messenger who ran to David, after the battle of Mahanaim, exclaiming "All is well !" But even as the burden of that message brought by Ahimaaz was simply victory, without any narrative of details, so was the Old Testament proclamation of the good news to our earth. There was still need of a Cushi to give details; and Cushi did come upon the heels of Ahimaaz, telling that the essence of the victory lay in the fact of the leader of the host being himself slain. It is thus the New Testament has overtaken the Old, proclaiming "Tidings, O earth! Tidings! It is the Son of God who has died, satisfying the Law of His Father, and establishing His throne." In the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:32) Paul announced to the intently listening audience, "We declare unto you glad tidings !" and forthwith added, that the promise made to the fathers was now fulfilled in Jesus risen. It was as if he had said, "The voice from the excellent glory cries, Hear the beloved Son! and speaks of nothing but what He is, has, and has done." That vessel which has endured all the storms of wrath, that ark which has borne unmoved the shock of cataracts from the opened windows of heaven, and depths breaking up below, contains everything fitted to meet the sinner’s need; and in proportion as the Holy Ghost reveals this Person to the awakened sinner, there will come to light a store of all things suited to the cravings of an immortal soul. When the sinner has got any clear discovery of this glorious Person, he is a saved man; for so we find written in Galatians 1:13, Galatians 1:15-16, "Ye have heard of my conversation in time past. . . . But it pleased God . . . to reveal His Son in me." Matthew 16:16, "Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven."

Resting on this Person for salvation is called "Faith in Jesus Christ." In this faith, there is an intellectual act - namely, the apprehending of the meaning of what is stated concerning Jesus. But this apprehension of the meaning of what is stated, or testified, concerning Jesus, is but the avenue that leads on to the magnificent mansion. It leads the soul to the Person of whom these things are declared. It never is the belief of bare propositions that saves the soul ; for these have to do only with the understanding. Propositions, however weighty, must guide us onward to the Person who is the essence of the testimony; and they are made use of for this end by the same Holy Spirit who enlightens our once carnal understanding to see the real truth.*

* "Though faith be radically in the understanding, yet it operates on the will which embraces the object" (FISHER’S Catechism). "Faith is begun in the head, but not perfected till it comes into the heart" (ROGERS of Dedham). "Faith is not so much a disposition of the mind toward the truth, as a disposition of the heart toward Christ, produced by means of the truth" (SIEVEWRIGHT). "The soul in believing closes with the Person of Christ. He is the principal object, though not the immediate object of faith" (FRASER of Brae). The belief of the testimony, or record, concerning

the Son of God, our Saviour, is the porch of the building, through which we pass into the audience-chamber and meet the Living Inhabitant, full of light, and life, and love.

There is a twofold remedy required to meet the exigencies of a fallen soul.

1st, The soul must feel entirely delivered from that guilt which has compelled the Holy God to withdraw. The sinner's soul is by nature laden with guilt, the guilt of original and actual sin; and until this guilt is altogether taken away, there can be no freedom of access to God. But remove this barrier, and then the Holy God may meet the sinner, and the sinner may run to the open arms of the Holy God. This is the bringing of the conscience to solid rest.

2nd, The soul has feelings, emotions, affections, which constitute what we call in common language the heart of the man. The heart, then, must be brought to its rest, as well as the conscience; and it will be brought to rest, if you can find for it an object vast enough, rich enough, and so accommodated to its frame as to give ample scope for the exercise of all its powers, and the play of all its feelings.

Now, both these ends are answered when the soul discovers the Person of the God-man. There it is that the twofold remedy is found. For now, the conscience, enabled by the Holy Spirit to discern and examine the treasures stored up in the God-man Mediator, finds all the materials needful to its pacification and rest, inasmuch as His obedience to the law and the satisfaction rendered by Him for dishonour done to it, are efficacious beyond measure. And next, when enabled by the same Spirit of truth to explore the wealth of sympathy, and tenderness, and brotherly feeling, wherewith the God-man is fraught, and which is given forth from the side of His humanity, the man finds therein such an object as his heart craved, an object on which his heart can repose.

It is now that he tastes "The Bread of Life." It is only now that he knows the meaning of making the Saviour his meat and drink (John 6:52); for it is now that he has found out the entire remedy for his case in the person of a Mediator, who unites the human nature with the Divine, and uses both in dealing with man. Finding flesh and blood (and, of course, all that is peculiar to a frame wherein flesh and blood are ingredients) in a Saviour, whose doing, dying, and rising again brought in everlasting righteousness, the man can say - " Every part of my nature has been thought upon, and provision has been made for all my feelings and faculties, as well as conscience: this is indeed meat and drink to me! His flesh is meat indeed! His blood is drink indeed!" Our purpose, then, is to enter into details whereby we may show that the Person of Christ is, and has always been, the essence of the Gospel. The glad tidings of great joy all cluster round that Person; invitations and calls draw us to Him; and warrants for believing the Gospel are in reality testimonies, the drift of which is mainly this - to fix our eye upon that Person's self, and assure us of the capabilities of His heart and arm. And no wonder that it should be so; for He is GOD manifest in the flesh. To see Him is to see GOD in the attitude of redemption. To see him is to see the GOD of holy love putting Himself in a position wherein He might be able, justly and honourably, to save sinners. To see Him is to see Godhead finding a way of coming to sinners with open arms, and yet remaining as holy, and just, and true, as from all eternity. To show that this is the essence of the Gospel may be important alike to saints who already fear the Lord, and to sinners who are only groping for Him. Both are thus led directly to confront God, - " God manifest in the flesh," in "whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." The saint finds that here he floats upon an ocean of grace, and that the more constantly he abides here, the

more is he blessed. The seeking sinner finds that his perplexities are cleared away, when he is dealing, not with abstract truth, nor with cold statements, but with a Person, and that person full of grace and truth.

"Come, now" (come, I pray you; come, I beseech you), "let us reason together, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 1:18). Here are two parties before us - not one party dealing with the words and declarations of another, but two parties confronting each other. It is a meeting of spirit with spirit - the spirit of man with God who is spirit. It is the living man coming to hear the living God tell His heart and ways.

Bunyan, in his "Pilgrim's Progress," represents Christian, when relieved of his burden at the cross, singing with joy - "Blest cross! blest sepulchre! blest rather be THE MAN that there was put to shame for me." And in his "Instruction for the Ignorant," the following dialogue occurs : - Question. If such a poor sinner as I am would be saved from the wrath to come, how must I believe?

Answer. Thy first question should be, on whom must I believe? John 9:35-36, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?"

Q. On whom, then, must I believe?

A. On the Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. Who is Jesus Christ, that I might believe on Him?

A. He is the only-begotten Son of God.

Q. Why must I believe on Him?

A. Because He is the Saviour of the world.

Q. How is He the Saviour of the world?

A. By the Father's designation and sending; for God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Q. How did He come into the world?

A. In man's flesh - in which flesh He fulfilled the law, died for our sins, conquered the devil and death, and obtained eternal redemption for us.

Q. But is there no other way to be saved but by believing in Jesus Christ?

A. There is no other name given under heaven, among men, whereby we must be saved. And therefore he that believeth not shall be damned. Acts 4:12, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Mark 16:16, "But he that believeth not shall be damned." John 3:18, John 3:36, "He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Q. What is believing on Jesus Christ?

A. It is the receiving of Him, with what is in Him, as the gift of God to thee, a sinner. John 1:12, "To as many as receive Him, even to them that believe on His name, He gave power to become sons of God."

Q. What is in Jesus Christ to encourage me to receive Him?

A. Infinite righteousness to justify thee, and the Spirit without measure to sanctify thee.

Q. Is this made mine if I receive Christ?

A. Yes, if you receive him as God offereth Him to thee.

Q. How doth God offer Him to me?

A. Even as a rich man freely offereth an alms to a beggar - and so must thou receive Him. John 6:32-35, "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven; for the bread of God is He that cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." Then said they unto Him, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." And Jesus said unto them, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst."

02.02. Chapter 2

The Gospel pointing to the Person of Christ - Chapter 2 THE GOSPEL, FROM THE FALL TO THE DAY OF THE APOSTLES, WAS FOUND IN THE PERSON OF THE SAVIOUR. In the New Testament, the name of "Mystery" is often attached to the truths that form the Gospel. The chief part of this mystery, or "truth hidden from eternity in God" (Ephesians 3:19), concerned the Person of the Saviour. When the real nature of this person was unfolded, other things which had been dark began forthwith to emerge from their obscurity and appear distinct. It could not but be plain now why blood should be the means of atonement, since the blood is the out-poured life, and the out-poured life is the life of Him who is the Son of God. The blood poured out in every sacrifice spoke of some one giving his life; but the nature of the effect of this blood-shedding could be understood only when the person, in his worth and dignity, became known.

Hence it was that all patriarchs and ancient saints were directed unceasingly to the Living One as the well-spring of their bliss. Their hands were every day fully employed in offering sacrifice, but yet all the while their eye was looking beyond that sacrifice for some one yet to come, who was to cast light on this service and make them "perfect as pertaining to the conscience" (Hebrews 9:9). Their thoughts (however confusedly) passed from the types of the work of Christ on to the expected Person of Christ. And hence Paul declares, the discovery of who this coming one was, to be the "making manifest of the mystery." When writing to the Romans (Romans 16:23), he thus speaks, "According to my gospel, and the preaching of (i.e., proclamation concerning) the Lord Jesus Christ; according to the revelation of the mystery, which had been kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest."

It seems that ancient saints were aware that the Person of the Coming One was to cast light on all the ceremonials and ordinances which they were taught to observe. For Peter, in telling of "salvation," states that the prophets who inquired and searched diligently into it, bent their chief attention toward "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter 1:10-11). And the same is implied by the words of our Lord to His disciples in reference to His being now at length among them in the flesh, when turning to them He said, "Blessed are the eyes that see the things which ye see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them" (Luke 10:24).

Onward from the hour when first the announcement of a Saviour was made in the words, "The seed of the Woman shall bruise the head of the serpent," the anxious inquiries of all saints were directed toward this person, to know who and what He was to be. The case of the Old Testament believers was like that of exiles, who had got the promise of return from banishment, but who saw not the means by which they were to be transported homeward from their dreary island of captivity. At length one whose eye has looked through the telescope comes among them, points them to a speck in the distant horizon, telling them that yonder is the vessel sent to carry them home. They have had intimations of their sovereign’s pardon and goodwill already, but this is the

most satisfactory proof of it. Accordingly, hour after hour do they keep their eye fixed on that distant object, and their joy rises in proportion as they are able distinctly to discern that yonder speck is indeed a vessel, bearing colours that proclaim from what land it has come. Having in their possession letters sealed with the king's seal, which speak of actual deliverance to be brought them when such a vessel should touch their coasts, they reckon its arrival to be their grand hope, and expect to find therein everything needed for their immediate recall. This was the position of Old Testament saints: they were gazing on this speck in the distant ocean. The vessel was seen by Job a little more distinctly than by previous patriarchs, when he sang, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He will stand on the earth at the latter day;" and yet more plainly by those who heard that He was to be "Abraham's seed," and "Shiloh" from the tribe of Judah, and "David's son," as well as "David's Lord." A still clearer sight was gained when Isaiah stood and cried, "To us a child is born, to us a son is given, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God!" (Isaiah 9:6). And yet more, when Zechariah declared that he heard the Almighty call Him "The Man that is My Fellow!" (Zechariah 13:7). The vessel was now seen with joyful distinctness, and the hope of the Lord's banished ones grew brighter and brighter, as Malachi (Malachi 3:1) cried, "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple." In revealing salvation to men, in early ages, the Lord arranged His discoveries in such a way as necessarily led them to give the Person of the Redeemer a prominent place in all their thoughts. It was with them more the Redeemer than even redemption. They did not well know how this Noah was to save them, or how he was to guide the ark through floods, rushing from below and from above; and how, over these strange billows, he was finally to land it in the strange harbour of Ararat. But what of this, if they were really trusting themselves to this Noah, and were identified with him in his undertaking? He knew, and he would accomplish all.

It was thus also, in great measure, with the disciples and followers of our Lord in the days of His flesh. They knew amazingly little of His work in its details, but truly they clung to His Person. Is there any hint of their loving any other as they loved Him? They rested on the Shepherd's shoulder, and in so doing were safe. They did not know how this Shepherd was to save them; how He was to deliver them from the lion and the bear, and carry them over the burning desert of wrath; but still, they were safe, because they rested on Him. They clung to the right person, and committed themselves to His wisdom, and power, and love. Was this not the essence of old Simeon's hope of salvation? Was he not the traveller arrived at the sources of the Nile, surveying the fountain from which living waters had flowed, and were yet to flow, to fertilise the earth? When he took up the child Jesus in his arms, the aged saint exclaimed, "Now Thou art letting Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation" (Luke 2:29-30).

What else but a message about His Person was the gospel preached by the Angel at Bethlehem, which sent home the shepherds "glorifying and praising God"? The words were, "A Saviour is born, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). This is what the Angel calls "good tidings of great joy." Let wise men and shepherds, let Mary and Joseph, let Zechariah and Elizabeth, let Anna and Simeon, let all who hear this proclaimed, cling to this Person, and in Him they shall find salvation. They may not see in what manner, or by what process, He is to save them, but cling to this Person, and all shall be well. The Baptist comes forth. His preaching is a constant pointing to "the Lamb of God." His finger is ever directing men to Him. All good news is yonder, and bliss is in that Person, "the Son of God," who stands among you. He saw the Spirit descend on Him, and ever

after bare record that "He was THE SON OF GOD" (John 1:34).

"Herein is great joy for all people! The Person we cling to for salvation turns out to be 'SON OF GOD!' The promised Seed of Abraham, and the Seed of the Woman, in whom all our hope is treasured up, is none other than the SON OF GOD! What may we not expect of Him! How full may our cup now be!" Some such must have been the feelings of those who first saw the glorious truth, especially when the discovery burst fresh upon them.The news would fly from one to another - "The Messiah is none other than God! GOD is manifest in flesh" * (1 Timothy 3:16).

* Even as saints still feel, when the Holy Ghost sets it very vividly before them. Howell Harris, in one of his letters, saith: "O the mystery! That this man is God! He wept. He travelled, bore cold, rain, hunger, and thirst; all reproach, shame, and all other sorrows for me. My loving, everlasting brother! Sure this Lord is my love! My soul within me is lost in wonder, and melts like wax. O this love! This mysterious, unfathomable love!" And little as they knew of the mode of His working, or how He was to proceed in going forward to save them, they clung to His Person closer than ever. As their fathers followed the cloudy pillar, longing to see the face of Him who sat therein, so they followed Jesus, longing to see what He would yet reveal of Himself and of His ways. And they were right in so clinging to Him. Peter was asked, along with his fellow-disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" (Matthew 16:13), obviously with the view of bringing out fully who this Saviour was who appeared under that form. And his reply, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God," drew forth the declaration, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona! Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." So great was the discovery - He that is come to save is God! For such a one must be able to save. He cannot but bring full salvation - a salvation that will have length and breadth in it, height and depth, sufficient every way for a sinner.

It was thus also that Peter made a similar confession on another occasion (John 6:69) with great emphasis: "We believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." He adheres to this Person; and yet so little does he understand the work which that Person is to perform, that on the mention of suffering, and reproach, and death (Matthew 16:21), "that He must suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed," though followed by resurrection, he peremptorily insists that the idea was utterly inconsistent with his Lord's dignity and char- acter. We are ready to think that ignorance of, or mistake regarding, the work of Christ is as hurtful and dangerous as misunderstanding His Person. But the Lord Himself lays somewhat greater stress upon our not mistaking His Person. That Person is the mine; His work is one of the treasures which come to the surface when the mine is wrought.

It was not enough that a Jew confessed Jesus to be the Christ - the Messiah. He might do this and yet be ignorant of the Saviour. He must know Messiah to be SON OF GOD, if he was to know true salvation. For what could Messiah do for sinners if (like the Christ of Socinians) He were only a superior, though extraordinary man - and what could a Messiah do for such sinners as we are, if He were (like the Christ of Arians) only at the top of the angelic scale? We needed a Messiah who could "save to the uttermost," and none other than the SON OF GOD could stretch the cords of salvation thus far. It is on this account that our Lord Himself says most solemnly in John 8:24, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." He had declared Himself "from above" (John 8:23), and "not of this world," and had said, "I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me" (John 8:16). And now, turning to the cavilling crowd of Pharisees, He looked them in the face, and

with awful seriousness and majesty in His tone, assured them, "If ye believe not I am He (the Person whom I have said I am), ye shall die in your sins." But did not the disciples falter oftentimes in their views of His Person? And did not the ancient saints fall short of knowing the Promised Seed to be GOD THE SON? So far this is true. But at least they expected a Saviour from the Lord Jehovah, and were ready to welcome this Person without faltering or hesitation. Perhaps there were none of those saints who had not some idea, however dim, of God being somehow in the salvation promised; and never certainly did any saved men, in any age, deny or slight the Godhead of the Saviour, when revealed to his astonished gaze. Every saved soul has been too glad to find God Himself the Saviour; "Behold God is my salvation," - and seeing Him has said, "I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy will we draw water out of the wells of salvation" (Isaiah 12:2-3).

"Hidden from all ages past Was the Cross's mystery;

Death a while a veil had cast O'er that first dear family; But they saw Him and believed, And as Lord and God received." The saints' hopes have, in every age, revolved around "Him that cometh in the name of the Lord." To have the heart fixed on the Lord, and on Him whom He was to send, is the heart and kernel of ancient faith. It is the Old Testament form of our Gospel that we hear when, in the "song of songs," the Spouse dwells upon the Beloved, and repeats and reiterates His praises. Who this Beloved is seems scarcely known; He has a veil on His Person; but, nevertheless, there is a mysterious strength of feeling between this Beloved and those who sing of Him, arising from the secret fact that GOD THE SON is the Beloved under the veil.

"Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved" (Song of Solomon 8:5). This surely is a sketch of Patriarchal and Jewish faith - just as the figure of the "Sheep on the Shepherd's shoulder," so often appearing on the tombs in the catacombs at Rome, is the symbol of the same faith in New Testament times. When the Apostle John, in his first Epistle, thus writes (1 John 5:20) to the saints: "And we know that the SON OF GOD is come!" he unquestionably is uttering, and intending to utter, the full gospel-privileges of believers. He says that this distinguished them from the world - viz., they know that the promised Seed had come, and that He was the Son of God. By that time the Church had arrived at clearer light; for John in his gospel (John 6:69) tells of Peter's glowing animation as he confessed, Thou art Messiah, the Son of the living God; and of Martha's unhesitating declaration, that, as a matter of course, she, a disciple of the Lord Jesus, believed that He was "The Messiah, the Son of God, who should come into the world." Nor was it otherwise when disciples were able to give more precise details of the Person, as we see in the Ethiopian eunuch's joyful confession, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God!" We may conceive his feelings - he had journeyed far, many a hundred miles - risking the favour of his queen, and caring little for his place of rank. He had sought rest for his awakened soul in vain, even in Jerusalem at their solemn feasts. But a stranger, a true evangelist, is sent to him, as his chariot rolls lazily and silently over the sandy desert-road towards Gaza, and finds him reading in the fifty-third of Isaiah concerning one "led as a Lamb to the slaughter." The stranger tells him who this was, and how, and why, and when He had been led to death; and proclaims the tidings, that "this Lamb was Son of God!" What a flash of amazement and delight passes over the Ethiopian's countenance! He is under the teaching of the Holy Ghost (for it was He who was hovering over him, v. 29-39), and saw in a moment what that fact implied. Here is room for my soul now! Here my burdened spirit may repose.*

* "If you ask why I believe on the Son of God - if you intend what is the formal reason, ground, and warranty, whereon I thus believe in Him, or place my confidence in Him - I say it is only this, that ‘He is over all, God blessed for ever.’ And were He not so, I could not believe in Him. The divine nature is the reason of it, but His divine Person is the object of it" (OWEN). The Person who is the Lamb is Son of God! Here is not a narrow point of a rock, rising above the surrounding water, but no more than barely sufficient for one to stand upon: here is a broad continent to which the eye sees no limit! With what exultation is he filled in confessing, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God!"

We are wrong, in our day, when we speak more of the work of Christ than of His person - directing more attention to the shadow afforded by the great Rock than to the Rock itself. This is not done in the Apostolic Epistles - there the work is not separated from the worker, but ever kept beside him, and He beside the work.*

* As Augustine (Confess., Book v. 1) says of the other works of God, "The soul bending over the things thou hast made, and passing on to Thee who hast made them, there finds its refreshment and true strength." In Romans 3:22, the righteousness is said to be, not "by faith in the work" of Christ, but "by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe." And again in Romans 3:24, "Justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood." Again, in Romans 5:1, "We have peace through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." Again, in Romans 6:4, "We are buried with Him," or, Romans 6:8, "we are dead with Him."

Union to Him, as our representative, is the very heart of the argument. Or, if the Apostle is writing freely about Christian blessings, as in Ephesians 1:1-23, we are told of being "blessed with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ;" and (Ephesians 1:6-7) of being "accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption."

These men of God, whom the Holy Spirit inspired, lead the sinner to the shade of the Plant of Renown; but all the while they are occupying his attention by pointing out the Plant itself - its majestic form, and glorious growth, and ever green foliage, and the immense sweep of its branches; and while they are thus engaged, the traveller is refreshed tenfold more effectually than if he had been content merely to stretch himself along in motionless repose beneath the spreading boughs. "We have boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus," says the apostle; but forthwith he adds, "Having an High Priest over the House of God" (Hebrews 10:19, Hebrews 10:21). The Lord’s Supper also, if it be rightly understood, cannot fail to fix our eye on the Person. No doubt it speaks of the death, and of the New Covenant ratified by that death, and so of pardon and holiness, and all other connected benefits. But who can overlook the Benefactor amid his benefits? Are we not led directly, at that holy ordinance, to His Person, inasmuch as union to Him is the truth most remarkably exhibited therein? Union to Him who gives us His blood to ratify the New Covenant, and who gives us Himself as the food of our souls, is surely the very essence of the Lord’s Supper. We show His "death," with our eye on "Him who died." We show His sufferings of body and of soul, with our eye on the suffering one. We think of our sins requiring such a remedy - our wounds needing such balm - but still with our eye fixed on the Person whose stripes heal us. "Till He come" fixes yet again our eye on Himself, so that its gaze passes from the day of His agony onward to the day of His glory, and looks out for the "King in His beauty," as well as

looks back on His marred form. The Holy Ghost delights in the Person of Christ. It was to honour not only His work, but Himself, that He descended on the day of His baptism. It is not merely the work, but the doer of it, that He delights to honour. The expressions, "He will glorify Me" (John 16:14), and "He shall testify of Me" (John 15:26), do not, of course, exclude His work; they necessarily imply it; only they do not mean His work apart from Himself. The Holy Ghost will ever honour the setting forth. of the Person who has given glory to God in the highest, and is Himself God over all. We may expect Him to bless us most when we are rather dwelling on the benefits as so many proofs of the Benefactor’s heart, than stopping short at these benefits, seeking no more than how to make them our own. The hospital, with its ample accommodation, and its stores of medicine and nourishment, and its supply of all that the sick, however many, can require, with access free to all, at every hour of night or day, this is one thing - but how much better, when besides, we have the presence of the founder and Physician Himself, passing through every room - bending over every sick-bed - uttering words and beaming forth looks of sympathy. Would you commend the place, and forget the physician? And will the Holy Ghost commend the Saviour’s benefits, if thereby you are to be led to overlook Himself?

02.03. Chapter 3

The Gospel pointing to the Person of Christ - Chapter 3 THE HELP AFFORDED BY CHRIST'S PERSON TO A SOUL SEEKING TO KNOW SIN AND THE APPLICATION OF SALVATION.

Many of the early fathers use the word "theology," in the sense of "A discoursing upon the Divinity of Christ," and they called the apostle John "the Divine," or the Theologue," because he speaks so fully of the Word made flesh. To these Fathers all knowledge of God seemed comprehended in knowing Him who reveals the Father. And following their principles, we maintain that all real knowledge of God's salvation is to be attained by becoming acquainted with Him who is the Saviour sent of God. In the days of the Reformation, we find Fox, the martyrologist, telling Roman Catholics that, "as there is no gift of God given to man, no virtue, work, merit, nor anything else, that is part or cause of salvation, but only this gift of faith to believe in Christ Jesus" - so also "neither does faith, as it is only a bare quality or action in man's mind, itself justify, unless it be directed to the body of Christ crucified as its object, of whom it receiveth all its virtue." *

* Oliver Cromwell, in his day, writes to General Fleetwood : - " Faith as an act yields not perfect peace, but only carries us to Him who is our perfect rest and peace." In all ages of the Church, to know "Whom we have believed" has been felt to be all-important. In whatever light we view the matter, its importance will appear.

1. It helps us to discover the malignity of sin.

Right views of sin have a tendency to lead us to right views of the Person of the Saviour. But the converse also is true; right views of the Saviour's person lead to right views of sin.

Socinians and Arians have shallow views of sin. They do not see that it deserves never-ending woe and infinite fierceness of wrath; nor do they feel their conscience alarmed at the enormous depravity of nature, and at the fearfully aggravated sins against God which they daily commit. Hence they see not the need they have of a Divine Saviour - one able to bear infinite wrath for the innumerable sins of a multitude whom no man can number.*

* The Elect - those given to Christ by His Father from eternity - His sheep - are not few in number, but "many." God out of his mere good pleasure, looking on a world where all alike were already ruined, elected "many" to everlasting life. Isaiah 53:12, "He bare the sin of many." Matthew 20:28, "Ransom for many;" Matthew 26:28, "My blood shed for many." Romans 5:15, "Many shall be made righteous." Electing love has laid hold of an innumerable multitude, and drawn them out of the many waters, putting every sin of every one of them on the Almighty's Fellow, the man Christ Jesus, and imparting to them the grace given them in Him before the world began. (1 Timothy 1:9)

They are conscious that if it required the personal interposition of a divine surety to remove it, the sin must be very great; that it must indeed be branded as hateful beyond conception, if, ere it be forgiven, the Lawgiver himself must die. From these men, therefore, we learn to judge thus ; - that if we would feel the enormity of sin aright, we must see it calling for no less a satisfaction than

what could be given by God Incarnate. The Roman Catholic, whose eye turns oftener far to the Virgin Mary than to Mary's Son, has not surely felt the true nature of sin, the rigour of the law, or the terror of divine judgment. Hence, such men are content to seek pardon through a creature's merits, and think that the intercession of a multitude of such creatures may prevail for them. But did they see sin under the teaching of the Spirit they would trust their pardon to no one but the God-man, Christ Jesus. And in point of fact, when Romanists are awakened by the Holy Spirit to deep sense of sin, they forthwith begin to feel how insufficient, how unsatisfactory, how incomplete is any kind of peace that does not come from the Incarnate Son of God. They begin to see sin to be such an evil as only God can remedy. From these, therefore, let us learn to judge thus; - it is in Christ, the Son of God, substituted for the sinner, that we see the abyss of evil in our sin, and that we become aware that sin is so clamorous for wrath as to be silenced only by the interposed Person of the Son of God. But turn aside again; approach an infant newly born, drawing its first breath in this fallen world. There is sin in that soul, and small as the sin may seem when compared with that of sinners who have lived forty or seventy years, yet even the sin of that infant is such an evil as nothing can remedy but the blood of the Son of God. If the sin of that infant is to be forgiven, the Son of God must "pour out his soul unto death" in its behalf.

Set before you any one of your own acts of disobedience, selecting those which may, in your judgment, appear the smallest and slightest. Yet that act was sin; - such an act that, ere it can be forgiven and you received into favour, Godhead must be moved! God the Son must rise from His place on the Father's bosom and haste to your rescue. Less than this would be insufficient; less than this would be entirely useless. For the abyss is bottomless. No angel's strength could bear the burden of the wrath due to your one sin, while certainly no angel's love could endure the trial of interposing as your substitute. Sin is something that only God can deal with - a mysteriously tremendous evil.

These lessons are taught us when we fix our attention not on the mere blessing of forgiveness, but also on the Person who brings it. If we were to adopt another plan too commonly pursued, and merely speak of salvation as a work done and finished well - or as a door opened at which the vilest may come in - or as a free invitation to the chief of sinners - we might in that case miss altogether the clear light cast on sin by the Gospel. But on the other hand, connect all with the Person (and in this case with the divine nature of the Person) - show that here is the work of God in our nature, God occupying our law-room - that here is the door of access opened, but only in consequence of Almighty love shedding the blood of the Beloved Son, heaven's Isaac - that here is a free invitation to the vilest, but that it is thus free only because the Saviour who came was Creator of all creatures, and therefore able to fulfil all conditions, and pay the last mite - show all this, and forthwith the light of the cross is cast on sin, and you see it to be an infinite evil, an evil understood by God alone.*

* "Who can set forth the riches of His death, and the unfathomable abyss of His sufferings? The inexpressible evil of sin appears here more clearly than if we saw all the misery of the damned" (HOWELL HARRIS, Lett. 43).

Such is the heat of wrath against sin, that unless the "shadow" which interposed between me and that heat had been the broad, far-extending shadow of a "Great Rock," the air around me would have burnt as an oven still. Such is the burden of sin on my single person, that never could I have

been lifted up as a "lively stone," and my weight borne by the foundation-stone, unless the foundation had been God the Son. Surely, then, it was a gaping wound that sin had made, when such balm alone could heal it. O my soul, thou wert sinking fast in the swelling stream, and none could beat back the might of the wave but God, God in thy nature. A whole Christ was needed by thee, and that Christ, God ! - "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37) 2. The application of Salvation. A sinner may see that there is none other to whom we can go but Jesus only, and yet he may not go. He may imagine difficulties, and magnify these into impossibilities. But it is remarkable how many of these difficulties and apparent impossibilities flow down at the presence of the Person of the Lord - the soul beholding a full Saviour in Him who is God and man in one person. Clement of Rome (" whose name is in the Book of Life," Php 4:3), writes to the Corinthians,* * In an Epistle still preserved and reckoned genuine.

"Brethren, in our thoughts of Jesus Christ we ought to conceive of Him as God, and the Judge of quick and dead. We ought not to cherish low thoughts of Him who is our Saviour; for if our thoughts of Him are low, we will hope for little at His hand." This truth admits of wide application. A soul very deeply convinced of sin, or indeed convinced of sin at all as an awful reality, will find no object fit for its necessities but the person of God-man, associated with all he did. It was thus with a minister who lies buried in Bunhill Fields, Mr. Bradford. He was for a time an Arian, but was awakened to feel that he must be born again, while writing a. sermon on the words of Christ to Nicodemus. He felt sin in its power; he saw his sins to be innumerable, as well as inexpressibly heinous. "And now," says he, "the first relief I felt was from the view that Jesus Christ was GOD. His deity I now saw as the ground of all my confidence." No wonder! for it is there we see how the atonement could be sufficiently precious to avail for sinners such as we; it is only there we see how the Holy One could find a sacrifice for us pleasing and acceptable, and admitting of the widest application.

But, in cases where there is a tacit assent to the doctrine of the Person of Jesus, there is often a real and practical overlooking of it. Often the deeply exercised soul looks at all else rather than the Living One Himself - thinking of his ways, purposes, work, but shutting its eyes on Himself. Now, let that soul be led for a time to deal with the Person, and the effect will be marvellous, if the Holy Spirit enable him to see who this Person is.

"How am I to cross that mountain ?" says an anxious soul, pointing to the doctrine of electing love. "How am I to find myself among the number of the elect?" "And," says another, "if you cannot assure me that the blood of Christ was intended as much for me as for Peter or Paul, Mary Magdalene or Mary of Bethany, how can I rest on it?" Another, yet more bold, comes forward and declares that "if Christ did not die alike for all men, and bear all sinners alike on His heart when He died, then there is no truth sufficient for a sinner seeking salvation to rest upon."

Now, to all those travellers who would willingly (if they could) find out that there is no such mountain as electing love, because they fancy it is an insuperable one, we say at once, the Person of the Lord Jesus stands in front of that glorious mountain whose top touches heaven; and you have to do with His Person ere you set a foot on that mountain. Our warrant for believing in Christ is simply this, that He cries to the children of men, "To you, O men, I call." And he bids them ALL come in the first place to HIMSELF. Come and see this Person. (Proverbs 8:2) "If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink" (John 7:37). "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden"

(Matthew 11:28) - ye that are toiling up that mountain with a load on your souls that almost crushes you at every step.

All your difficulties about election are thus set aside for the time - set aside until you have found Christ Himself, "who will show you plainly of the Father" in due time. All your difficulties about election are in this manner transferred to Christ Himself, who it is (and not we) that must reconcile the universal call with His special love to His elect. Well, be content to leave the difficulty with Jesus; and meanwhile deal with a personal Saviour, not with words, and doctrines, and propositions. Say, if you will, “Perhaps I am not elected, and if so it will be in vain for me to expect a place among His redeemed “ - say this, if you will, but only go and see. Go to the Person, of the Christ, and throw thyself at His feet.

Now, you do throw yourself at Christ’s feet, when, letting alone for the time all these thoughts of election and the inquiry whether you are or are not in the Book of Life, you allow your soul to think of Christ Himself. Will Christ Himself refuse a coming sinner? He cannot; for it is written, “Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). He will not say that He has not a price sufficient to pay for you. He will not say that the foundation is not broad enough for you to build on. He will not say that he has not love sufficient to lead Him to have compassion on you. You may not be able to make out from some of Christ’s words whether or not there be room for you; but try Christ’s heart - appeal to Him as one “who receiveth sinners “ - and tell Him that such a sinner are you.

Never forget the Syrophenician mother’s dealing with the Lord. It is a case recorded as if on very purpose for such a state of soul as yours. This woman came, full of desire and hope, but was told, “I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Was not this confronting her at once with the darkest shadow of the highest height of the mountain of Election? It seemed to say, “There is no place for you.” It did not leave her an opening (as there is in your case) to say, “Possibly I am in the number “ - it seemed to deny that she was thought of at all. If ever there was a trying case it was here. But how did this woman act? She did not try to prove, as some do in our day, that there was not, and could not be, such a thing as special electing love - but she left that difficulty to be solved by the Lord Himself, and threw herself upon the Person of Jesus. She renewed her appeal to Himself “Lord, help me.” “Truth, Lord, but the dogs (and such am I) under the table eat of the crumbs.” She probed His heart; she believed there were depths of mercies there; and she found she was right! She has left us a proof that when a sinner repairs to the Person of the living Saviour, that sinner is at once met by Him; and the gracious colloquy begins - ”Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord” (Isaiah 1:18); and it will end with nothing less than absolution, “Though your sins have been as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they have been red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Believest thou this? In believing this, thy soul shall find acceptance with God; and in the same hour, thy Lord will let thee know that He had thee in His heart from eternity. It is thus that an anxious soul’s stumbling on the difficulty of election may become a real advantage. It guides the soul away from a thing to a person. His first question now is not, What does Christ think of me? But, What am I to think of Christ? The traveller is confronted by the frowning mountain-height, and this leads him at once to discover, ere he climbs even one height, the Person to whose dwelling he imagined he must come by long and laborious efforts. Boldly encounter the question, “Am I one of God’s elect? Am I one given to Christ by the Father from all eternity?” It will lead you directly to the Person of Jesus, as the only mode of

reaching a true and sure solution. It will send you not to the Book of Life, but to the Lamb who writes it; and in asking about Him, you find that He has singular love to sinners, and that “He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him” (Hebrews 7:25).*

* It is thus in general that little children rest on Christ. With little theology, they know and feel that this is He who died for sinners. Their faith is like that of Old Testament saints; it is the sheep resting on the shepherd’s shoulders, with little knowledge of how he saves them. Is this not enough?

We may here take occasion to observe that a fresh view of His Person, especially in its human aspect, seems, from the Gospels, to be the Lord’s way of removing the after fears of His own. We find that the Lord when on earth used to remove fear by revealing Himself. On that memorable night of storm, when wind and waves tossed the vessel, and darkness had spread its thickest veil over moon and stars, Jesus walked on the waters and approached them. The thought that it was “a Spirit” (Matthew 14:26), or angelic messenger (it might be some one of the “ ministering spirits “), was no consolation to men who at that hour were ready to perish, and who felt worthy to perish. They saw nothing in an angel’s presence but what might remind them, by contrast, of their own unholiness; and they knew nothing of the depth of an angel’s compassion. But no sooner did Jesus speak, “IT IS I,” than there was a calm in their souls, such as the after-calm on the surface of the lake was but an emblem of: “It is I!” I am here! was all He said. But they knew His heart as well as hand. They knew His love to them, unworthy as they were. They knew His sinner-love - His love to men. And why should we not have this same remedy for our anxieties? The living Jesus - Jesus full of human sympathies and divine glories!

It was so again after the Resurrection. In Luke 24:36-47, we read of the scene. The disciples had lately sinned, and were not as yet altogether at rest. When, therefore, one enters the Upper Room who seemed to be from the other side of the Veil, they are sore afraid - as if tidings from that side must be evil tidings to them, and as if a holy angel, even a holy ministering “spirit,” must have been sent on some errand of reproof or judgment. But it was the Lord! and He lifted up His voice with the salutation, “Peace” - man’s salutation taken up by the God-man’s lips into which grace is poured. And then He drew all their attention to His Person, as not that of an angel, but of one who had “flesh and bones - that is, who had man’s nature. He showed them “hands and feet; “ - the hands that had so often touched the sick to heal them, and been laid on themselves to bless them ; - the feet that for them had been weary on the highways of Judea and Galilee, and had got no rest till they touched the cold stone of Joseph’s sepulchre. “Why are ye troubled?” said He, as if to recall the night of the last supper: “Let not your hearts be troubled” (John 14:1-26). “And why do thoughts arise in your minds ? “ - thoughts or disputings as to who this was. He hastened yet farther to show them His true humanity - that He was the God-man, the Lord of glory, who put on their very nature; for He asked for fish and honey-comb, and did eat with them as a guest at their board. No wonder that (John 14:24) they were so full of joy at the very possibility of His very self being there, so full that they could scarcely allow themselves to believe it. But they show us in what manner immediate calm is to be found; and true rest from anxiety; they show us the real removal of questionings and troubles, and the simple means of being filled with joy unspeakable. The streams from Lebanon furnish it all! The Person of the God-man presents thoughts, and declares truths, and reveals feelings towards us, such as may well cause a soul to cry, “All my springs are in thee!” He did not come saying, “Peter, I love thee;” “Bartholomew, I love thee,” “And

I love thee, Thaddeus," "And thee, Philip " - but He took a way which made all of them feel more than even if He had done and said this very thing, He presented among them Himself in His humanity! Lo! (as if he had said) Lo! I am among you, the Incarnate God, whose love has led me to be man's Redeemer. Handle me and see! Draw out of this well - wherein is love not only to you, Peter, and to you, Bartholomew, and to you, Thaddeus, and to you, Philip - but to "a great multitude whom no man can number," out of every kindred, and tongue, and people. Draw from this Well and thirst no more.

"He that hath ears to hear let him hear." To have rejected the Saviour - to have slighted Him - to have refused to make Him welcome, on the pretext of imagined difficulties, will be as the "worm that never dies" to your soul! And further we say, to have received less than the Person of Him who died and rose again - to have been satisfied with mere propositions and statements, with mere doctrines and truths, instead of embracing in your heart the very Person to whom all these referred will be to you the "worm that never dies" - a subject of endless regret in eternity, when regret is unavailing. You are like a man laying himself to repose on the bosom of a cloud, on the white down of the ocean's foam. Oh, the misery of the soul that is content with a shadow instead of substance ! - content with a vague belief that there was a sort of general love and mercy to all, and a kind of general vindication of righteousness and moral govern- ment, instead of taking the full, ample soul-filling and conscience-filling atonement, - salvation. for him by means of such a personal substitute as the Lord Jesus, the Son of the Highest !

What is "Wrath to come," if, to avert it from sinners, the Lord Jehovah rose from His throne! But on the other hand, where is the possibility of perishing if a sinner accept Him who has come ? Yonder is the baring of. the Almighty's bosom, proclaiming, "Yet there is room." Yonder is an ocean-depth of love, which even Manasseh has not yet fathomed - yonder is an atmosphere of love to the height of which even Paul has never soared! And (herein indeed is love!) we may taste it, each for ourselves! It is the bosom on which even we may for ever rest.

02.04. Chapter 4

The Gospel pointing to the Person of Christ - Chapter 4 HOW LOOKING TO THE PERSON OF CHRIST TENDS TO PROMOTE THE PEACE THAT PASSES UNDERSTANDING. No one could be supposed to have seen the Alps, if he tells you that all he saw was some rocky ridges of hills which his eye felt no strain in looking to. The Alps are not such hills; they tower to the clouds. Equally true it is that no one can be considered as having really seen sin, who never saw it to be very great; or to have got real rest to his soul, who has not seen the Saviour to be very great. Indeed, very great salvation is needed in order to give any true peace to a soul truly awakened; such salvation as is discovered when the soul discovers the Person of the Saviour. Then it sings, "Jah Jehovah is my strength and song, and has become my salvation" (Isaiah 12:2). "In Jah Jehovah*

*These are the only passages where that particular combination occurs, "Jah-Jehovah;" as if to gather up the fulness of Godhead-existence in one clause, when singing of Him who is our salvation.

He from whom every drop of being came is mine! is the Rock of ages" (Isaiah 26:4).

Even one sin makes peace flee from the soul, as we see in the case of Adam and Eve. Even one sin fills the soul with suspicions of God and suggestions of fear. Of course, then, the conscience of every sinner abounds in materials for fear before God. Achan may be secure for a time, while his wedge of gold and his Babylonish garment remain hid in the tent; but let a hurricane from the howling wilderness shake the cords and canvas of his tent, threatening to blow aside the covering of his theft, and then he is full of alarm! Now, to the conscience of the sinner, every sin is like Achan’s theft. There may be a present calm in the air, but who can promise that there shall not arise a stormy wind? a hurricane threatening to tear up the stakes of his earthly tabernacle? Who can engage that every sin shall not be laid bare? Who can give security that the sinner shall not in the twinkling of an eye be sisted at the bar of the Holy One? It is a small matter to say that at present all is at rest within. A city may be wrapt in slumber, and under the calm moon may seem as quiet as a cemetery; and yet the first beams of the morning sun may awake sleeping rebels, and witness the burst of revolutionary frenzy.

Every sin is secretly uttering to the man God’s sentence of death; insinuating uneasy forebodings regarding coming wrath. Every sin mutters to the sinner something more or less distinct about having wronged God, and about God being too holy and just to let it slip from remembrance. And when the quickening Spirit is at work in the conscience, every sin cries loudly to the Lord for vengeance against him in whose heart it has its abode. For such a state of soul only one thing can avail - namely the discovery which the Spirit makes to the man in conversion, the discovery of Christ’s full sacrifice for sin. Therein may be seen a propitiation as full and efficacious as conscience craves, because it was wrought out by Him who is God-man. Therein may be seen the whole Person of the Saviour presented to the soul as the object to be embraced, and that person associated with the merit of all He has done and suffered. Nay more; every act and suffering of

that glorious Person confronts the case of every sinner. Not only does he remedy the case of every individual sinner of all that "multitude which no man can number," but besides He meets every individual sin, and applies out-poured life to each stain, to blot it out. This is exactly what was needed. If I see Him who is the atonement to be God-man, then I see an offering so vast, and so extensive in its applications, that every crevice of the conscience must be reached.

He is our peace, not by His death only, but by His life of obedience also, imputed to us. The more, therefore, we go into details with His Person (the Person of Him whose every act and agony has an infinite capability of application because of His being the God-man), then the more shall we see good reason why our peace through Him should be peace "passing understanding" (Php 4:7). Let us exhibit some details of the kind we refer to - viz., His personal acts and sufferings meeting my personal disobedience and my personal desert of wrath.*

* "His humiliation expiates our pride; His perfect love atones for our ingratitude; His exquisite tenderness pleads for our insensibility" (JOHN NEWTON, Sermon I.).

I confess the sin of my nature, my original sin; "Behold! I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalms 51:5). But I see in Christ one who, while He was "that Holy One," was born to be holiness to others (Luke 1:25). His dying was fully sufficient to remove the guilt of my conception, and my connection with Adam; while His doing was holy from the womb. Behold! then, here am I in my substitute! My infancy without iniquity, nay, with actual purity, in the eye of Him who is well pleased with my Substitute.

I confess the sin of my childhood. My childhood and youth were vanity. But I find in Christ, God-man and my Substitute, deliverance from all this guilt. "The child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him" (Luke 2:40). I get all the positive merit of this childhood of my surety, full as it was of holy wisdom, and free from every taint of folly and thoughtlessness; and along with this I get the atoning merit of His death. And thus I present to God both satisfaction for the trespasses I have done in my childhood, and also obedience equivalent in full to what the law had right even then to expect or claim from me.

I confess more particularly the sin of my thoughts, "Every imagination of the thoughts of my heart has been only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). But I discover Him who not only by death perfected the atonement for me, but who also obeyed my obedience in the thoughts of the heart, saying, "Thy law is within my heart" (in midst of my bowels) (Psalms 40:8).

I confess the sin of my words, my idle words, my evil words. For it is written (Matthew 12:36), "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." But I find in this great atonement the penalty paid for my every idle word. I find, at the same time, the rendering of the obedience due by me, inasmuch as his mouth was a well of life, "grace was poured into his lips" (Psalms 45:2), and men never heard him utter aught but words of holiness.

I confess the sin of my duties; for example, the sin of my careless worship in the sanctuary. But I find my glorious Substitute worshipping for me in the synagogue. (Luke 4:16), "He came to Nazareth, and as His custom was He went into the synagogue." I find Him vindicating the honour of His Father in the temple-service. (John 2:17), "Make not My Father’s house an house of merchandise. And His disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." His songs of praise, His deep attention to the written Word there read, His joining in

the public prayers, all this He puts to my account, as if I had done it acceptably and done so always, - while in the same moment, by His shed blood, He blots out every accusation against me for omissions and guilty acts.

I confess my prayerlessness in secret. It has grieved the Lord to the heart. But I find my Surety "rising a great while before day, and departing to a solitary place to pray" (Mark 1:35); or, "continuing all night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12). This He will impute to me, as if I had so prayed every day and night; at the same time plunging my sins of omission into the depths of the sea.

I confess and deplore heart-sins of various kinds. I lament instability of soul; my goodness is like the early dew. But He was "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," both God-ward and man-ward (Hebrews 13:8). I feel hardness of heart. But He imputes to me His own tenderness, and reckons to my account His own yearnings of soul for the glory of His Father. I am stubborn; but He can say, "The Lord God opened mine ear, and, I was not rebellious, neither turned away backwards" (Isaiah 50:5). In me is guile; but "in His mouth was no guile found" (1 Peter 2:22). And thus there is ready not only the warp of satisfaction for transgression, but also the woof of rendered obedience.

Let me still go on a little in this application of my Lord’s active and passive righteousness. Do I feel my soul in anguish, because of indulging ambitious projects, seeking to be somewhat? I find Him "not seeking His own glory" (John 8:50): and this fold of His robe He will cast over me, while by His blood He washes me from all my self-seeking.

I have pleased myself. But of Him it is testified, "He pleased not Himself" (Romans 14:2). I have sought my own will. But He could declare before the Father and to men, "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30). And thus has He fully given the very form of obedience that I have omitted to render. He gave what I withheld; and He will give it for me, at the same time that my guilt in withholding it is hidden in His blood.

I have been worldly. I have loved "the world and the things that are in the world" (1 John 2:15); not only the objects it presents, but the very place itself, in preference to place and things wherein the direct presence of God might be enjoyed. But He did not. "He was not of the world" (John 17:14). He never had any of its treasure; it is doubtful if He ever possessed or handled any of its money; we are sure He had nowhere to lay His head.. The world hated Him, "because He testified that the works thereof were evil" (John 7:7). And all this He has at hand to impute to me, while He washes me from guilt.

I have been often double-minded. His eye was always single. "I have glorified Thee" (John 17:4) was always true of Him. I have been inconsistent; but even Satan could find "nothing in Him" (John 16:30). And He could challenge His foes, "which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John 8:46). My pride and haughtiness have need of One who was "meek and lowly." And such I find in Him; and I find Him calling me to come to Him as such, and use Him (Matthew 11:29).

If I have backslidden, yet my Surety’s course was truly like "the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18). "He increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52). Instead of lukewarmness ever on any occasion appearing in Him , such was His zeal for men’s salvation that at one time friends stood by and said, "He is beside Himself" (Mark 3:21); and at another, His disciples were irresistibly led back to the words of the

Psalmist, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up" (John 2:17). Now, all this active righteousness in Him is for my use. He will throw over me this other fold of His robe, as well as apply His infinitely precious death, - and thus no one shall ever be able to accuse me of backsliding, God accepting my Surety's work for me.

I have grieved the Spirit. But oh, how Christ honoured Him! Such blessed things He said of Him! "The Comforter," "the Spirit of truth," "the Holy Spirit," were names which He applied to Him; and Himself had been led by Him in delighted acquiescence. "Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness" (Luke 4:1). He has something here to present instead of my provocations; and what He has, He will use for me. Only let me know the treasures hid in His Person, and my consolation must abound.

I have been unthankful; but oh! how my Surety abounded in thanksgivings, - thanksgivings for food, - thanksgivings for the Gospel revealed to babes, - thanksgivings for the communion table, because it proclaimed His dying for us. Herein I find obedience to a law I broke, the law of gratitude - while in the sacrifice of Calvary I find expiation for my guilty ingratitude.

I think upon my unconcern for souls. And I find the remedy for that iniquity in Him whose heart burned "to seek and save that which was lost," and who plunged into the sea of wrath in order to redeem - for every step in His atonement has in it something of obedience as well as satisfaction.

Oh, inconceivable fulness for us in Him! whatever be the special sin which our conscience at any moment is feeling. Only let us ever keep Christ Himself in view, Christ clothed to the foot in that garment of active and passive righteousness.

It is thus we get the sea, with all its multitudinous waves*

* There is a wave of it for ministerial failures; for He never failed, but could appeal to His Father, "I have declared thy faithfulness, and thy salvation" (Psalms 40:9-10). His Shepherd's heart and work cover over ours. And so let a teacher repair to Him for the hiding of sins in teaching. "In the day-time He was teaching in the temple" (Luke 21:37). "I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple" (John 18:20).

(Isaiah 48:18, "righteousness like the waves of the sea"), to flow up every creek and sweep round every bay. His Person being such, His work completely fits into the soul's necessities. And all this is so great, that not only does it affect us negatively, - not only does this full view of Christ remove every tremor from the soul, - it works besides into the heart a positive bestowal of bliss.

It is as sometimes in nature when every breath of wind is so lulled asleep that not a leaf moves on the bough of any tree; the sun is shedding his parting ray on the still foliage; and the sea rests as if it had become a pavement of crystal. This is peace in nature. Your heart feels, amid such a scene, not only the absence of whatever might create alarm or disquiet, but the presence also of some elements of positive enjoyment, as if there were an infusion of bliss in the scene. Now, infinitely more is this the case in the kingdom of grace. The presence of Christ in the heart (the Spirit there testifying of Christ) lulls fear to sleep; and while He makes disquiet almost an impossibility, never fails to bring in positive delight and bliss. There is something in it to "keep the heart and mind" (garrison, and so preserve secure) (Php 4:7). And what is this positive element but the real outbreathing of direct friendship and love for Him whose heart we now know? He removes the

barriers out of the way and out of sight, in order to bring in Himself with all His love, - Himself rich in all affections and bowels of mercy. And is not this the true "healing" of the "hurt"? Was not the "hurt," our separation from the Holy One, caused by sin? Is not this the "healing," then, our return to fellowship with Him?

It is worth while asking, in every case of apparent peace, whether or not this positive element exists. Is there not only the absence of dread and a calmness in looking towards the Holy One, but, in addition to this, is there direct enjoyment of Him who gives the peace? The work of Christ, if seen apart from His Person, may give freedom from dread of wrath, but it can scarcely impart that positive delight in His restored friendship, which alone "keepeth the heart and mind."

"HE is our Peace," says Paul, in Ephesians 2:14. And when, in Php 4:7 he spoke of His peace keeping the heart and mind (" the thoughts"- in the original), he said it was "by Christ Jesus." Was not Paul here directed by the Spirit to insert this clause in order to fix our eye on the Person who is our peace - the true "Jehovah-shalom?" (Judges 6:24). And is not the reason of this to be found in the fact that in proportion as we see the Person, our soul's peace spreads and deepens? Certainly, all who have tried it find this to be the case. The more they know of Him, the more complete is their souls' rest. It is shallow peace (if it be indeed the "peace of God" at all), when the Person of the Peacemaker is not directly realised. And now, seeing we have such advantages above Old Testament saints, who saw the Person so dimly, are there not duties and responsibilities resulting? "The darkness is past and the true light now shineth" (1 John 2:8). Therefore (says John) there is for you "A new commandment." He seems to mean that the increase of light has given force to every demand for obedience; and especially that the appearing of this Light, the Person Jesus, has brought with it peculiar motives to obedience. May we not say that if we get such peace in Jesus Christ, and have Himself to calm our souls, the Lord may well expect at our hands a higher style of obedience than in former days?

Peace has its responsibilities - such peace through such a Redeemer, has no common responsibilities. We are freed from burdens in order to work for God - we are fully justified in order to be the more fully sanctified. Carry this kind of peace with you everywhere, and you cannot fail ever. where to show that you are with Jesus; for it is Himself realised that gives it. Your claim to real peace implies your seeing Christ Himself, and enjoying His fellowship. If so, then you may well be expected to show likeness to Jesus; for "he that walketh with the wise men shall be wise ' (Proverbs 13:20). Your peace will be characterised by purity, as all ever is that comes from God (James 3:17), and as all must be that is the direct effect of an eye fixed on "God manifest in the flesh." Your peace "in Jesus Christ" will keep you daily at His side, engaged in His work, guided by His look, satisfied with His smile, living to do His will. Who could have his eye on that Saviour continually, and there see "peace in heaven" toward himself, and yet at the same time turn his feet into the by-paths of unholiness? Were your peace gotten or maintained by looking at an act of your own - viz., your having once believed, or having done the thing called believing, then possibly you might be at peace, and yet after all not walk with God. But in as much as true Scriptural peace is gotten and maintained by the sinner's eye resting at the moment on the Person of Him who is our peace - on the person of Jehovah-shalom*

* Judges 6:24, "Jehovah is peace;" like John 4:8, "God is Love." It is at the altar of sacrifice that "Jehovah is peace."

- it is not possible to be at peace and yet at the same time willingly wander from fellowship with the Holy One. Christ, our Peace-maker, walks among us wherever is to be found anything "true, or honest, or just, or lovely, or of good report " - wherever is to be seen "any virtue or any praise" (Php 4:8). And he who has peace by having his eye on Christ cannot enjoy this peace without being led at the same moment to these walks of Christ. Hence it is that Paul writes to the Philippian Church - to Lydia, and the Jailor, and Euodias, and Syntyche, and Clement - that "the God of peace would be with them" while they pursued these objects (Php 4:8-9). If they were found at any time wandering from these holy paths, it would be a sufficient sign to them (as it will be to us also), that they had for the time taken off their eyes from Him who was their peace - and so, ere they were aware, had lost the enjoyment of that deep, profound peace, which "keepeth the heart and mind."

02.05. Chapter 5

The Gospel pointing to the Person of Christ - Chapter 5 HOW LOOKING TO THE PERSON TENDS TO ADVANCE HOLINESS IN THE SOUL.

"SANCTIFY them by the truth" was our Lord’s prayer; but it is truth in connection with Himself. For, separate from Him, doctrines "have no living power, but are as waters separated from the fountain; they dry up, or become a noisome puddle, or as a beam interrupted from its continuity with the sun is immediately deprived of light." (Owen on Person of Christ.)

There is an expressive type in the old economy that bears on this subject. The cherubim (emblems of the redeemed) stood upon the mercy-seat or lid of the Ark - that lid, or mercy-seat, on which the blood was seventimes sprinkled every atonement day. In this manner is set forth the soul’s resting on the work of Christ; for here is His shed blood, and the feet of the cherubim touch that blood. But, at the same time, notice that they stood not on the blood alone, but on the mercy-seat - a part of that Ark which altogether was typical of Christ Himself, the depositary or treasure-chest of all our blessings. Thus they exhibited rest on the Person as well as on the work of Christ. Again; the cherubim looked down upon the blood that lay on the mercy-seat; but their look was not less fully directed towards the mercy-seat itself, and the Ark too. Once more; these symbolic figures of the redeemed spread out their wings over the blood, but not over that alone, but at least as fully over the mercy-seat and Ark - a significant action, expressive of their regarding it as worthy of care - nay, as being to them what to the mother-bird her brood is in the nest. The wings were spread forth on either side, as if purposely to show that the whole of the Ark was their care, the object of their solicitude and their delight.

Perhaps there was still more signified in their connection with that Ark. They not only stood upon it, and leant their whole weight on it, but they were also joined to it. For they formed one piece with the mercy-seat, which was the upper part of the Ark, and which was all of gold. Not content with representing them as ever gazing on this object, the Lord set forth their union to Himself who is the mercy-seat - union to Him in His glorified state (for they and it were of gold), sharing in all the fruits of His finished work and begun glory.

Union to Christ’s Person is a fact in the case of every believer, and ought therefore to be a constant subject of meditation to every believer. Now, this union realised leads to a realising of the Person. Hence, in the Lord’s Supper, it is always important for the communicant to ask, with Paul, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? (1 Corinthians 10:16). That ordinance, so rich in blessing and in blessed suggestions, is fitted always to bring us back to a fresh and present realising of the Person of Jesus, by bringing us to a remembrance of our union to that Person. Can we think of union to Him, and not go on to ask, Who is this to whom I am united? Who is this that is my husband? Who is this that is far more mine than the husband is the wife’s? What is His heart? What is His hand of might? Where are His possessions? Where are the proofs of His love? Are His glories bursting on my view? The great truth, which the Ark in the Old

Testament, and the Lord's Supper in the New, is so well fitted to keep before us, has been the object of endeavour and pursuit (if not always of attainment) to all believers who have been found growing in holiness. In the latter days of the life of Howell Harris, of Wales, the intent gaze of his soul on the Person of Jesus is as remarkable, as was his intent look to the terrors of Sinai in earlier days. He writes to a friend (Let. 43), "One view of Him, in His eternal Godhead, and so of the infinity of His Person, love, obedience, and suffering, is worth millions of worlds." In another (Let. 52), "How is it with all you? Doth the veil wear off, and doth the glory of a crucified Saviour appear brighter and brighter? Oh, my brother, that Man is indeed the eternal God. What views doth He give vile me of Himself! He shines brightly like the sun at noon! Oh, what heart of stone would not melt to see the eternal God lying in a manger, sweating and tired, wearing His thorny crown, not opening His mouth, because He bare our sin and shame? Go on, my dear brother, and be bold in the great mystery of God become man."

Undoubtedly it mellows and matures the character of saints to be much occupied with their Lord's Person; but as undoubtedly it quickens their sense of obligation, and keeps alive love and gratitude, to be thus ever in contact with a personal Saviour. Ideas, however noble, may leave our souls comparatively dry, and they will always leave us infinitely less affected in our conscience, than when we meet our God in His personality.*

* Trench, in one of his Hulsean Lectures, puts the case thus: "Oh, how great the difference between submitting ourselves to a complex of rules, and casting ourselves upon a beating heart" (P. 122).

Now, while all believers do in some measure deal with a personal Christ, yet all do not seek to extend their experience of it; although the more this is done, the more fervent, and mild, and calm will all holiness be in their souls; for then they take it fresh from the spring, and that spring is the calm, deep soul of Jesus. There will be a difference in the tone of, their life, and the fulness of their conformity to the image of their Lord, in proportion as their eye rests more or less frequently on His Person. Indeed, so much is this the case, that we are inclined to think that Peter referred very specially to this style of experience, when he was inspired to write, "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour ~ Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

Many saints seem to be little aware how much of grace there is in the knowledge of the Person of Jesus. It would singularly benefit some of these, who have lived much on what they know about Jesus, to try for a week the more blessed and fruitful way of dealing directly with Himself. There are treasures in the Person of Him whose doctrines they believe, if only they could use them. A great philosopher says, on another subject, what we may accommodate to this : - " A man may believe in the work and Person of Christ for twenty years, and only in the twenty-first - in some great moment - is he astonished at the rich substance of His belief - the rich warmth of this naphthaspring." He adds to his ideas a person, and exchanges knowledge about a truth for knowledge of Him that is true - yes, exchanges opinions for a deep joy in the Living One, a joy which nothing earthly gave nor can destroy. By this looking to the Person, the believer's holiness, or growth in grace, is advanced in a threefold way. For this looking to the Person leads - 1. To communion; 2. To a realising of His life for us; 3. To imitation ; - all which conform the soul to His likeness.

1. Communion with Him is one result, and a sanctifying result. When we dwell on the Saviour's Person, we are in His company. Faith places us by His side, and shows us His glory, until what we see makes our heart burn within us. We are virtually put in the position of disciples walking by His side, witnessing His excellences, basking in the radiance of grace and truth from His countenance, hearing His words. Now, this contemplation of Him is transforming in its effects; "Beholding the glory of the Lord, we are changed: into the same image" (2 Corinthians 3:18) This is the plan which the Holy Spirit takes in conforming us to Christ's image. In this way He daguerreotypes on our prepared hearts the likeness of Him whom we look to. This communion was carried on very constantly by Samuel Rutherford while in exile, hour after hour. The day seemed short while so engaged; and thus it was he exhorted a friend: "I urge upon you a nearer communion with Christ, and a growing communion. There are curtains to be drawn by in Christ that we never saw, and new foldings of love in Him. I despair that ever I shall win to the far end of that love; there are so many plies in it. Therefore, dig deep - and set by as much time in the day for Him as you can - He will be won by labour." But is it not intimated to us, by there being such a book as "the Song of Songs," that the Lord desires far more of our communion with Him than we generally relish? Was not that Song of Songs written to teach us this dealing with Himself? It was given to the Church in Old Testament days, when His Person as yet was dimly seen; for so great was His desire for this personal converse with us, He would teach it even then. How much more now should it be our occupation, when we see the Bridegroom, and know Him as revealed by Himself. Is there much of that tender love in the present day? Are there many of His own who are saying to Him, "Let me kiss Him with the kisses of His love" (Song of Solomon 1:1) - using that figure for want of any other adequate terms? Are many telling Him , "I am sick of love. If ye find my beloved, tell Him that I am sick of love ?" (Song of Solomon 5:8). Have we at all adequately realised our privilege of holding "fellowship" with Him, as a man speaketh to His friend? "Truly," said John, "our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3). There was here personal intercourse, the soul of disciples with the soul of the master. There was no doubt, in spirit, all the reality of the converse exhibited in the Song of Songs, and realised by each disciple in the Upper Room.

2. Thus living on the Son of God personally leads us to realise His life for us. By His life for us is meant His manner of spending for us the three-and-thirty years He lived on earth, as well as His continually using for us "the power of his endless life," now in heaven. All that is associated with that Person, we cannot but seek to call to mind. Every notice of His former walk on earth we eagerly read, that we may thereby know His heart, He being "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

All the records of His sympathy with us in our misery, every trait of His tender pity, whatever indicates His thoughts, we peruse with untiring fondness - returning to the meditation again and again with as engrossing an interest as at first. On this account the four gospels possess indescribable attractions; for there it is we glean the finest wheat - glimpses of His glory and grace, human and divine. What He did, what He said, what He suffered, what He felt, what He thought; how He was silent, how He spoke; His journeyings, His places of rest; the words He used in healing, the look, the prayer, the touch, the command, the call - all have an engrossing interest, because God-man is there. And then, not less, the outgushings of grace and truth, in the outpouring of His soul unto death, and in the resurrection-victory, and in the discoveries of the same heart toward us when His exaltation was begun, and His robe of righteousness had been

waved with acceptance before the Father. But still more. We follow Him as "He feeds among the lilies." We try to feel His heart beating for us in heaven; and just as one walking with Aaron, the High Priest, could not but see the breast-plate with its names, so we cannot fail to see that this Jesus bears the names of His own on His heart. We find it written, "We shall be saved by His life" (Romans 5:10). We go up to Him, and find His love as intense, and His merit as fresh, as when He rose from the tomb. We realise Him as "every moment watering His vine " - interceding and obtaining daily grace for us. His life above is a life of love, no less than was His life below. Behold, how He thinks upon us night and day! Not content with putting into our hand the cup of blessing on the day of our conversion He takes care to keep it in our possession and to keep us from spilling its new wine. He remembers still how he hid us in the cleft on that day when we flew as trembling doves to the rock; and he keeps us as safely hid as ever. Not only did He once blot out our sins, but he is employed in seeing that the writing never reappear. He once put on us a robe of righteousness: he every hour continues to keep it on us, in spite of blasts from earth and hell. He once plunged all our sins in the depth of the sea. He still appears for us in the presence of God, keeping the deep tide that buries these sins from ever ebbing. He once acquitted us and gained us honour far greater than was gained by Mordecai before Ahasuerus: He is every day still engaged in preventing us ever falling into disgrace. In this manner we feel our acceptance and the communication of blessing to us fresh each day, through Him who is our life; and so nothing in our religion grows old, and none of our reasons for close dependence on Him are past and out of date; nay, our every-day life is in a manner a daily repetition of the day of our first conversion. By this view a daily impulse is given to our walk with God. Is not this what we need for continual progress? And is not this the Spirit’s manner of watering the roots of the plants of grace? And at the same time, as a man much in Aaron’s company would see on His person and garments the anointing oil, so in our interceding Lord we see the Holy Spirit dwelling without measure. We see Him with the "seven Spirits of God," and this all for us. Our eye, resting on the Person of Jesus, discovers therein a reservoir of all holiness for our souls, inasmuch as he has the Spirit without measure. And so we learn to take from Him "that other Comforter," who delights to glorify the Saviour, and who is Himself infinite love and loveliness. What a sight for a soul like ours! "The Spirit of wisdom and revelation," dwelling in Him whom we long to know more and more. We read, in a manner, on His vesture and on His thigh, "Thou hast received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also!" (Psalms 68:18).

3. But further, there is Imitation - imitation of Him we look upon. Long ago Origen (Neander’s Ch.Hist., vol ii.p.283) wrote : - " Faith brings with it a spiritual communion with Him in whom one believes; and hence a kindred disposition of mind which will manifest itself in works - the object of faith being taken up into the inner life." We do not look only on His wounds, but also on His holy steps; and we not only look, but by the sure leading of that Spirit who shows us what we see, we at the same moment seek to imitate. For the inmost soul is moved.* * The soul whose sight all-quickening grace renews Takes the resemblance of the good she views; As diamonds stript of their opaque disguise Reflect the noonday glory of the skies (C0WPER).

Looking much to Jesus in His person, we instinctively (so to speak) copy what we see. Indeed, real holiness is simply the "Imitation of Christ," after He has washed us, and in the depth of His atoning grace left us without guilt. It is grateful imitation, not the imitation of those who are working for life. Much in the presence of our Benefactor who so loved us, we would fain resemble him in

our character and state of mind, and so we seek to copy what is imitable in His ways, and in all He manifested of Himself while redeeming us. We are led to desire (as Paul recommends in Php 2:5) to be filled with the "mind that was in Christ," that mind which shone out so attractively as He bore the cross and drank the cup to the dregs - for the Apostle Peter (Php 2:22-24) exhorts us to observe even His example while hanging on the cross as containing some matter for imitation, some footsteps for us to walk in. In this same way true and steady looking to Christ's Person would, by the Spirit's teaching, lead us into the experience of that "charity" which is described in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. It is said to have these fourteen qualities, each one of which is best learned by beholding it in Christ, the original.

1. "Charity suffereth long." Where was this love illustrated if not in our Lord when He refused to bring down fire on the rejecters of His grace - stretched out His hands all day to rebels - bore mockery, blasphemy, wrong, the scourge, the crown of thorns, the reed, the blindfolding napkin, and the cross itself?

2. Charity is "kind" And who so truly kind as Jesus, crying with loud voice, "It is finished," and bringing us life in the moment of His own death - proclaiming the sweetest news with the vinegar at His lips! When was Joseph so kind to his brethren? Who ever so heaped coals of fire upon an enemy's head?

3. If ever we are to learn the love that "envieth not," we must see it in Him who desired nought for Himself, but disinterestedly and unceasingly sought to make our condition better, happier, greater. If our Priest, who wore the robe without a seam, had worn the priestly mitre on His brow, on it would have been written, "More blessed to give than to receive." He interfered with none of our comforts, not even in thought: it was only with our miseries. Let us drink in His unenvious, unselfish love, leaving our fellow-men all the true good they have, anxious only to make them have as much as ourselves.

4. Looking to His Person again, we see "charity vaunteth not itself." In Him is no ostentation, no parade of His doings. We read all the gospels through, and never find His love put itself forward for show. He does not clothe the naked and tell that He has done it; or relieve a Lazarus, and then remind the man that He has done him a favour; or heal, and proclaim His rare skill. Even His redeeming love is rather set within our view in His actions and agonies, as in so many wells whence we may draw, than pressed on us in words. Nor did He upbraid, or taunt, or shout haughty triumph over a soul subdued and forgiven - so little of parade had He. His is a Father's love to a prodigal son, too glad to gain the opportunity of pouring out itself on its object. Where shall we learn unostentatious love, if not here?

5. Or are we to learn the love that "is not puffed up " - that has no inward self-gratulation, no self-complacent thought of its own magnanimity in the deed so kindly done? It is to be learned surely by looking to Him who was satisfied in gaining His gracious object, in finding scope for love. No look or tone of His ever made His benefactions disagreeable to those who received them; for His was a charity that despised none, being the great love of God (Job 36:5). If we will learn holy love to others, let us learn it at Christ's holy love to us; as painters take for models the masterpieces of the best artists and copy them line by line.

6. Behold His love, and see how charity "doth not behave itself unseemly." You see a delicate propriety and a fine attention to the feelings in Christ's dealings of love. No rudeness, no harshness, no indiscretion; nothing mean, nothing unpolite; time, place, and persons were all consistently and tenderly considered. Even in this, the Righteous Servant "dealt prudently." With what tender delicacy, and yet determined love, did He deal with the woman of Samaria, till at last He had withdrawn the veil and confronted her conscience with her five husbands and the one that bore that name still! Even to Judas, in the hour of dark treachery, love could say, "Friend, wherefore art thou come ?" Never was there extravagant demonstration; never the shadow of affectation. There is seemly love to be learned in its perfection here, but only here, only in Jesus Himself.

7. And need we dwell on the charity "that seeketh not her own"? In the life and death of Him, who "was servant of all," we see this love to the full - the seeking love of God - the love that sought us and ours.

8. The same love is seen "not easily provoked." See it personified in Him who stands there and groans over the city, "Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together!" (Matthew 24:37). No bitter wrongs ever drew forth a hasty word, or angry look, or revengeful blow. They spat in His face, they plucked off His hair, they smote Him with the palms of their hand, they put on the purple robe - but it drew forth only love.

9. His love was charity that "thinketh no evil" - that never had a passing thought of injuring its worst foes, nor imagined them worse than they showed themselves to be. His were thoughts of peace, and not of evil, towards the men that crucified Him. "If thou hadst known, even thou!" (Luke 19:42).

10. It is at His side we see and learn "love rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." The good of those whom He loved He sought not to advance by any unholy gratification. His love was such as felt grieved at seeing its objects seeking happiness in ways not good and true. It had no joy in seeing iniquity anywhere, far less seeing it have place in the hearts of friends, however pleasing and fascinating that iniquity might be. The truth was what His love rejoiced in. Hence His love led him to protest and war against sinful pleasures and pursuits: for His love was no Eli-like fondness. It was love that would not give to those whom it embraced a cup in which one drop of gall was mingled, however much they thirsted. Where else shall we learn charity like this?

11. And then in Him we see love which "beareth all things " - endures trouble for others, and takes on itself the task of covering from view what is wrong.

12. This love, too, is love that" believeth all things." Yes, His love was a love ever ready to confide in its objects, ready to trust Matthew as soon as he was called, making him an Apostle, and then an Evangelist - ready to trust Peter, after his fall, bidding him "feed His sheep " - not suspicious and distrustful. Oh, to learn from Him such generous love ! Surely it is well for us to keep much company with Him in whom it dwells.

13. His love "hoped all things." It was like the love of a friend, who, sitting by the death-bed of one whom he loves, hopes on still, even when all physicians have given up hope - hopes because he loves so much and wishes what he hopes for. Such was the love of Jesus; not easily giving up its object - not soon cutting down its barren fig-trees (Luke 13:8). More of His love would make our life more perseveringly devoted to the good of others, however slight were the symptoms of success.

And it is this we need in our day! And once more:

14. His, indeed, was the charity that "endured all things," which did not faint in its pursuit, nor was baffled by difficulties. "Many waters could not quench His love, nor could the floods drown it." Oh, to drink in this love - this holy charity! finding it all in the Saviour's Person.

Such was the portrait an Apostle drew, The bright original was one he knew;

Heaven held his hand - the likeness must be true (COWPER). But the tendency to imitate the person whom we love, and with whom we oft personally converse, extends to the feelings as well as actions. We drink deep into his sorrows and his joys. The Spirit of truth shows us "The Man of Sorrows;" and lifting up a little of the veil from such an hour as that which heard the cry, "Eli ! Eli!" discovers to us the unknown anguish which was borne as the wrath due to us. This woe, of course, we are not asked to bear, though into it we are ever to desire to look; but in His other sorrows there is much by sympathising with which we may be made to drink in His holiness. One of the sorrows that made Him cry, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove" (Psalms 55:4-6), was the sight of a man's corruption. Into this feeling the soul that walks by the side of Jesus tries to enter. If, again, another source of sorrow to Christ was man's misery, so that He groaned in spirit at the sight (John 11:33), into this the companion of Jesus tries to enter. If another was the prospect of the doom overhanging sinners, with this, too, the believer sympathises, seeking to climb the Mount of Olives, and to stand with Jesus weeping over the guilty city (Luke 19:42). If Jesus is seen grieved over the fewness of the coming ones, "Where are the nine?" (Luke 17:17), or is heard expressing sorrowful surprise at the slow progress of His own (Luke 24:25), or if He watches like a sparrow alone (Psalms 102:6-7), or, "as an owl in the desert, as the pelican in the wilderness," content with His Father's sympathy - in all this the soul that loves the cormpany of "the Man of Sorrows" seeks to share. And by this means the Holy Ghost pours the melted soul into the mould of Christ's heart. Or, if it be the joys of the Man of Sorrows that he is tracing out, in these, too, he seeks to be like Him. One of Christ's joys - one brook by the way, of which He drank - was the certainty that the Father's will was done (Luke 10:21) ; a second was the consciousness that He Himself was doing the Father's will (John 4:34); a third was the presence of the Father felt around Him (Acts 2:25-26) ; a fourth, the conversion of sinners (Luke 15:1-32); a fifth, the growth of faith in His own (Matthew 8:10); and a sixth, the hope of the reward (Hebrews 12:2-3). In all these the growing believer, making Christ Himself his friend and divine companion, seeks to sympathise. He would fain be like Him whom he so loves.

There is something pleasant in noticing how Peter learnt to imitate his Lord by being so much in His company. When he goes to heal Dorcas (Acts 9:40-41) he put all out that wept and wailed, just as his Master did (Mark 5:37), and then the words, " Tabitha, arise," are brief, yet authoritative as his Master's "Talitha, cumi" (Matthew 5:41). So also he lifts up the lame man at the Beautiful Gate by the right hand (Acts 3:7), just as he had seen his Lord do (Mark 1:31) at Capernaum to his relative in her fever. Even so in greater things, the disciple falls into his Master's way and manner. Read his Epistles, and you see that, walking with the wise, he becomes wise; walking with the Gracious One, he becomes gracious; walking with Him who is holy, he becomes holy; walking with incarnate love and mercy, he becomes loving and merciful.

Among the friends of Alexander the Great, there was one named Hephaestion. It was said in regard to this man that he was "A lover of Alexander; " - none could doubt that man's personal

affection for him. There was at the same time another friend, Oraterus, who seemed equally warm in heart and devotedness. It was, however, more because of the benefits conferred on him by one so exalted and great than from personal attachment - and hence he was said to be "A lover of the King." Which of these two most resembled their master in character? All history tells us it was Hephaestion, he who so loved the Person. And even so shall it be with the saint who dwells more on the Person of Immanuel than upon his gifts. The latter will be what was said of Peter (somewhat deprecatingly) by some of the ancients, "A lover of Christ," while the former will be what was said most truly of John, "A lover of Jesus " - and, like John, will bear close resemblance to his Lord in every peculiar trait.

02.06. Chapter 6

The Gospel pointing to the Person of Christ - Chapter 6 HOW THIS LOOKING TO THE PERSON AFFECTS OUR VIEWS OF DEATH AND OUR HOPE OF THE LORD'S SECOND COMING. IN proportion as the soul advances in grace, its state coincides with that of the apostle, 'I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better; nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you' (Php 1:25). But at the same time that soul, if truly apostolic in its holiness, can add, 'Not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life' (2 Corinthians 5:4). It desires resurrection-bliss most of all, while, at the same time, it yearns after the lesser bliss of immediately passing into glory.

I. The main, and, indeed, the only, attraction of the intermediate state is this - there the redeemed see the Lord Jesus. He Himself is with them, and this is their heaven. In Revelation 6:9, the 'souls under the altar' are, undoubtedly, in this state; they are not represented in the glory of their resurrection state, as chap. Revelation 7:15-17, and some passages may seem to set forth. These souls are at the altar, where they have taken up their station in order to cry for justice being done on the earth, as well as in order to show that justice is satisfied as to themselves; and there they are met by one who gives them 'white robes,' and who tells them they are to 'rest for a season;' leading them away to recline in their white robes on those couches of rest of which Isaiah (Isaiah 57:2) has told us. This is all we see of their outward bliss; but we cannot fail to notice that the 'rest' here, and in Isaiah 14:13, is the continuation of the same 'rest' that their Lord from the very first spoke of giving (Matthew 11:28). It seems to be, like Lazarus in Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22), a reclining with the Lord Jesus in view - reclining at a feast with the eye fixed on Jesus in the midst. The moment a saint departs, he is 'with Christ.' This we read in Php 1:23, and, as we have already said, this 'being with Christ' is the essence of the bliss of that intermediate state, and is really all we know about it. The spirit of the departing one is received by Jesus (Acts 7:59); angels may receive it as it leaves the body (Luke 16:22), but they are not long of delivering it safe to their Lord. In His presence it rests, the sum of all its employments and its enjoyments being the sight and fellowship of the Lord Jesus. Nothing more is told us; for it would appear to be the design of the Lord to keep our eye on the Person of the beloved Son, as much on entering that unseen world as while here, and as much when arrived there as at entering.

'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.' They rest with Him, and see His face. They are gone to that 'mountain of myrrh and hill of frankincense'(Song of Solomon 4:6), where Jesus Himself sits - the right hand of the Father - and on the slopes of that hill they rest most pleasantly, beholding Him, and enjoying fellowship with Him, and waiting with Him for the daybreak and the flight of shadows. They are said to be 'in Paradise' (Luke 23:43), the name appropriated to some part of the glorious heavens where the throne of God is seen - appropriated to it because of being the special spot where the children of the Second Adam are gathered together. As paradise was an inner part of Eden (Genesis 2:8), so is this abode of the redeemed an inner part of heaven. Perhaps it is the same as New Jerusalem. (Revelation 21:10) But at any rate, does not that name tell us of a place where God, as before the Fall, once more communes with men? It seems to say

that the happy souls that dwell there, in light and love, are like unfallen Adam in his paradise - their chiefest joy being to hear the voice of the Lord God, to hear Him who is The Word of God.

We infer, then, that love to the Person of Jesus, and delight therein, is the state of mind nearest to that of those who have departed and are with Him. We are never more in sympathy with the saints departed than when rapt in intense meditation on the Lord's Person - examining the unspeakable gift, even Him 'in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' Never are we ourselves in a better frame for departing than when enabled by the spirit of wisdom and revelation to gaze on the Lord Jesus, and claim that Mercy-seat, and that Ark with all its contents, as our own. Never do we realise so well what it is to be separate from earth and enter the suburbs of heaven as when thus engrossed with Him who is our Plant of Renown, with all its fruit and foliage, freshness and fragrance, beauty and shade. Sitting, in such an hour, at the feet of Him who has 'the keys of death and the invisible world,' we are almost already ushered over the threshold.

II. But our attention is fixed more directly still upon the Person of the Lord Jesus, when we turn to the blessed hope, His Second Coming. The glories of that day are such, in themselves and in their influence on us, as to guide our eye to Him personally, and keep it resting on Him. When a believer is enabled to meditate much and often on 'that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of Him who is the Great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ,' his soul catches from afar something of the glory yet to be revealed - not unlike to what poetry has sung of the cheerful bird, 'the messenger of day,' which in the early dawn pours out its melody, soaring all the while higher and higher -'until the unrisen sun Gleams on its breast.' The believer, rapt into the future in his earnest anticipations, catches beams of that Better Sun which is yet to rise with healing on his wings. If the redeemed may say at death, 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness' (Psalms 17:15), much more may they add, in hope of that resurrection day, 'I shall be satisfied when I wake with His likeness', as if the rays of that morning were already shining on them with transforming power.

It shall be the Lamb Himself that shall lead each believer up from his quiet grave : - ' The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God.' (John 5:25) As in the hour of conversion, awakening from their wordly dreams, they saw that stupendous sight, the Son of Man lifted up on the cross (John 3:3-14), so in the hour of the First Resurrection, they shall see His face again, not now marred, but become the seat of majesty, glory, beauty, as well as holy love. The Lamb Himself shall then lead them to living fountains and feed them as a shepherd (Revelation 7:17); and this will keep the thoughts of the glorified for ever on Himself. He is still their sun, whence beam forth light, and life, and joy - light, life, joy, worthy of the sore travail of His soul, worthy of His strong cries, worthy of His endless merits.

Why is it that we hope for That Day ? Let John reply, 'When He shall appear we shall be like Him (1 John 3:2), for we shall see Him as He is.' Or let Paul tell how he, and Clement, and Epaphroditus, and the saints of Caesar's household, and all the believers whom he knew, anticipated that day. He says that it was the Lord Himself they delighted to look for. It was not so much the triumphs of that day, nor its palms, and crowns, and white robes, and shouts of Hallelujah over sorrows for ever vanished; but it was the thought of the Lord Himself being there that made that day so joyful. 'Our conversation is in heaven, whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ' (Php 3:21). And when they associated their own blessedness with these anticipations, it was in this form - 'We shall be LIKE HIM.' 'He shall change our vile body that it

may be fashioned LIKE UNTO HIS GLORIOUS BODY!'

What is this that Isaiah promises? 'The Lord shall be unto her an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory!' (Isaiah 60:19). No stretch of thought can conceive the amount of honour and bliss expressed in these few words. And what is this that the same prophet promises to each one that now walks with God? He says, happy soul, 'Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty' (Isaiah 33:17). This is the highest hope He can hold out to thee; this is the greatest of His rewards; this is His best joy. Thine eyes shall see, and not be dim ; thine eyes shall see, and not be dazzled into blindness; thine eyes shall see, and gaze with calm and constant delight on 'the King in His beauty' This is a promise of a true Transfiguration-day to thee. What was it that led the astonished multitude at the foot of the hill to run the Son of Man as He descended from the scene of His brief Transfiguration? (Matthew 9:15). What caused that assembly to salute Him with such reverence? Was it not the impression produced on them by even a few lingering beams of glory, that hung on His form as the brightness did on Moses after his forty days' interview with God ? And if that were so then, while He was seen under the returning clouds of sorrow, and while they who saw had not been fully anointed with the eye-salve that they might discern His real beauty, what may we not expect to enjoy on that day when the prophet's words are realised, 'Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty!' Are you a disciple whose eyes are often wistfully turned to the heavens, like the men of Galilee on the day of His ascension? You shall not always gaze in vain: 'Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.' Thou shalt see Him who is 'The fellow of the Almighty,' and yet also 'Man' (Zechariah 13:7); who can tell of 'men being His fellows' at the very moment that the Father proclaims him 'God' (Hebrews 1:9); whose human countenance, lighted up now with the 'joy unspeakable and full of glory,' tells what ecstasy is found in the Father's love; who is the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of His person, revealing Godhead to the very sense of the creature, in a manner so attractive and heart-satisfying that the song of rapturous delight never has a pause.

Art thou a weary pilgrim? Walk on a little longer with thine eye still toward the Right Hand of the Majesty on high; for soon thou shalt see 'the King in His beauty.' Hast thou been vexed, like righteous Lot, from day to day, in seeing and learning earth's wickedness? hast thou been saddened by witnessing death ravaging families, and removing some of thine own dearest ones? hast thou but dimly descried amid thy tears the form of Him who walked on the sea at midnight to reassure His dejected and trembling disciples? hast thou often been disappointed when thou didst think thou hadst got a look of things within the veil that would for ever turn thine eyes from beholding vanity ? - be of good cheer, ' Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.' Thy heaven shall consist in seeing Him as He is - knowing Him as He knoweth thee.

Among all the rewards offered to those who overcome, by the Captain of Salvation (when, after a sixty years' absence, He visited His suffering disciple in Patmos face to face), none is so magnificent, none so soul-filling, as that wherein He offers Himself in His glory. In this promised reward He may be said to offer us to Himself at the time when all His own reward has been bestowed, and when Himself has been anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. He writes, 'To him that overcometh and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of My Father.' Is not this enough? No, not yet; one thing more and better still by far, 'And I will give him the Morning Star' (Revelation 2:28). That is, I will

give him Myself at the time I appear as 'Bright and Morning Star' (Revelation 22:16), rising in our sky after a night of gloom, the harbinger of an endless day. The great bliss of that day is this, the gift of Christ Himself at a time when joy, peace, love, and glory, and the holiness, wisdom, power, and majesty of Godhead, are the beams that radiate from His person, and bathe those on whom He shines.

If, believer, you love much that Person of whom we have all along in these pages been speaking, then press on to the day of His coming, for then it is you are to get Him in His fullest glory. Then it is you are to get as your Redemption Him who has been your Wisdom, your Righteousness, your Sanctification. That 'Tower of David' was long ago gifted to you, with all its armoury; but your time for entering on the possession of it is now when it is furnished with whatever is magnificent, and royal, and heavenly, and divine; creation's riches being stored up therein. You shall see the Lord Jesus as yours at a time when His own and the Father's glory, and the glory of His angels, all combine to set forth His person. 'And your look that day shall be (says one) that of an owner, not the shy gaze of a passer-by.' That Christ, on yonder throne, is mine! With all His glory He is mine! That King of Kings, that Lord of Lords in His royal apparel, is mine! That beloved Son, whom the Father delighteth to honour for evermore, is mine! All that He is, all that He has, is mine! Does not this prospect make a present life seem dull? It pours contempt on earth's fairest scenes! It mocks ambition. It makes coveteousness appear folly and infatuation. It renders trial light and duty easy! Christ Himself ours! ours on that day when 'His peace' and 'His joy' are at their height! Our life is discovered to be 'Christ' (Colossians 3:4). Oh what a Christ that day reveals! The more intently we pore over what is to arrive on that day, we do the more intently gaze on the Person of the Son of God. We are kept in the very posture in which the Gospel of His First Coming placed us. On the one hand, we find that His coming to die and overcome death sends us forward to the coming again of Him who so overcame ; but on the other, no sooner are we in His presence, amid His own and the Father's glory, than, in grateful remembrance, we go back to him as He appeared to us in His low estate - these two views of Him so act and react on each other, combining to keep us ever in the attitude of beholding Himself.

There is to be no new Gospel for ever; and can there be need of any? The coming of the Lord shall fully unveil His Person, in whom all the Gospel is stored up. The feast of fat things full of marrow, in Isa. xxvi. 6, is the visible, as well as inward, discovery of His matchless person, in the day of His glory, when the pure canopy of the New Heavens, and the beauty shed over a Restored Creation, with all the teeming luxuriance of its hills and plains, and the melody of attendant harpers harping on the harps of heaven, shall be all but forgotten, because of the presence of the 'King in His beauty.' Called in from the hedges and highways (Matt. xxii. 1-10), we feast even at present on fragments of this greater feast; but we get as yet little more than the crumbs - for little indeed do we see of the real glory of the Lord. The Holy Spirit then, even as now, will continue to glorify Christ. There will be a fully unveiled Christ before us, and also there will be in us the Holy Spirit (unresisted by us and no longer grieved), springing up to eternal life, showing us His beauty. One difference only will there be - at present He gives us but drops, then He will pour upon us the horn of oil; and so shall we enter into the full joy of the Lord, not a scale left on our eye, nor one film left of the earthly mist that used to prevent our seeing Him who is the Image of God. The days of eternity shall pass on, and our eye shall never weary of looking on Him, but 'shall gaze upon His glories, as the eagle is said to do upon the meridian sun.' Ages upon ages pass, and still He is to

us all in all. We admit the light from His Person freely now; never did Moses so eagerly survey the goodly land from Pisgah, as we now survey the glories of the Lamb. We get looks into that heart where love has dwelt from everlasting, and where love shall dwell to everlasting. Eternity is in its full course! Long, long ago, we lost sight of the shores of time, and still He is the unexhausted and inexhaustible fountain to us of 'Good tidings of Great Joy!' Eternity only serves to let in upon our souls the fulness of the blessing given to us in the day when we received Him, and began to have fellowship in His Gospel. The Gospel is still 'THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL;' for Christ is its substance; Christ is its essence; Christ is its Alpha and Omega; and the life it has brought us is out of 'Christ our life,' and must be 'Life Everlasting.'

Henceforth, then, this one thing I do: 'I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord. I do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and that I may know Him. I follow after if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. I forget those things which are behind, and reach forth unto those things which are before - I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus' (Php 3:8-10, Php 3:12, Php 3:14). Dr. Owen spent some of the best years of his life in writing the 'Treatise on the Person of Christ,' and some of his last days in preparing for the press his 'Meditations on the Glory of Christ.' On the very day he died, a friend came to tell him that his book was now in the press, at which he expressed satisfaction. 'But, O Brother,' said he, 'the long looked for day is come at last, in which I will see that glory in another manner than I have ever done yet, or was capable of doing in this world !'

O Holy Spirit, grant that all of us may be found by the Lord when He calls, or when He comes, thus occupied in meditation on His Person and Glory, ready to start up at the call, saying to one another, 'O Brother, the looked for day is come at last !'

02.07. Chapter 7

The Gospel pointing to the Person of Christ - Appendix EXTRACTS FROM OLD AUTHORS.

"God would have us pitch our faith upon The Person of His Son, and not barely upon the Promise. And therefore, He has so ordered things in His divine wisdom that the Promises should all hold on Christ, and be Yea and Amen in Him." - TILLINGHAST's Six Sermons, p. 9.

"Saving faith is in the nature of it not a mere assent to a testimony, but a receiving and resting upon The Person of Jesus Christ alone, for salvation both from sin and wrath, and unto all the grace and glory of God." - CUDWORTH's Experience, p. 10.

"Those Divines who in their Catechetical Systems have made the formal object of Faith to be the Promise, rather than The Person of Christ, have failed in their expressions, if not in their intentions." - SPURSTOW on Romans 6:1.

"Folk must go first to Christ's Person before they can get good of His offices. Folk must make a direct address to the Person of the Mediator before they reap His purchase. Pardon is sweet, adoption is sweet, grace is sweet, heaven is sweet; but Christ is sweeter. " - WEBSTER'S Sermons, p. 88.

"Faith does not marry the soul to the portion, benefits, and privileges of Christ, but to Christ Himself. I don't say that the soul may not have an eye to these, and a respect to these in closing with Christ; yea, usually these are the first things that faith has in its eye. But the soul does, and must go higher; he must look at and pitch upon The Person of Christ, or his faith is not so right and complete as it ought to be. It is The Person of Christ that is the great fountain of all grace and of all manifestations of God to us; and faith accordingly does close with His Person." - PEARSE's Best Match, p. 160.

Such delight had Samuel Rutherford in The Person of Christ that he writes to his friends such things as the following : - " Holiness is not Christ; the blossoms and flavours of the Tree of Life are not the Tree itself" (Lett. 335). "He, He Himself, is more excellent than heaven. Oh, what a life were it to sit beside this Well of Love, and drink and sing, sing and drink!" (Lett. 288). "My greatest pain is want of Him; not of His joys and comforts, but of a near union and communion." "I have casten this work upon Christ, to get in Himself" (Lett. 187; Lett. 112). "I would be farther in upon Christ than at His joys, in where love and mercy lodgeth - beside His heart !" (Lett. 286). "Oh, if I could doat as much upon Himself as I do upon His love!" (Lett. 160). "I would fain learn not to idolise comfort, sense, joy, and sweet-felt presence. All these are but creatures, and nothing but the kingly robe, the golden ring, the bracelets of the Bridegroom. The Bridegroom Himself is better than all ornaments that are about Him" (Lett. 168). "If the comparison could stand, I would not exchange Christ with heaven itself" (Lett. 111).

Once more. A century ago, Romaine (Life of Faith, p. 159) thus wrote in expounding the verses 1 John 2:13-14, - " Many continue little children and weak in faith, because they do not presently

attain a solid acquaintance with The Person of Christ." The sum of the matter is this. There is a vast difference between, on the one hand, believing day by day in a living Saviour, and on the other, re

Chapter 17

03.00. Memoir of Life & Ministry of David Sandeman

BonarA - Memoir of Life & Ministry of David Sandeman, missionary to China (1861) 1. His Conversion 2. First Year after Conversion

03.01. His Conversion

Chapter 1 His Conversion "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?"

Micah 6:6

“Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him” (Psalms 149:2), is a call of the Holy Spirit addressed to those who have been made new, and made meet for the glory that is to be revealed, by Him who gave them their being. Whatever a believing man is, he owes it all to the sovereign grace of his God, who made him a vessel of honour; for his “willing and running” (Romans 10:16) came not from himself, but originated with God, “who sheweth mercy.”

It was entirely so with him of whom these pages speak. DAVID SANDEMAN, second son of Glas Sandeman, Esq. of Bonskied, was born at Perth, 23d April 1826. The pleasant residence of this prosperous family was Springland, close to the river Tay, within a mile of the town, and not far from a locality renowned in Scottish history, the old palace of Scone, where the kings of Scotland used to be crowned. In his infancy he was somewhat more sedate than children usually are, and in boyhood shewed no great interest in games that delighted his companions; yet he was always fearless in manly exercises, a bold rider, skater, and swimmer. It was not quickness, but perseverance, that distinguished him from other boys, along with regularity in all his habits and a strong sense of duty. At school, while his companions loved him for his kindliness, his teachers remarked his diligence and conscientious industry, which enabled him to outstrip cleverer scholars, so much so, that the rector of Perth Academy, Dr Miller, testified, in referring to his mathematical studies, that to him belonged the praise of bringing forward the entire class of which he was a member. The only incident of his younger years which seems marked by any special interest is his being sent, at the age of fifteen, to the Pestalozzian Institution at Worksop, in Nottinghamshire, conducted by Dr Hildenmaier. There, besides laying the foundation of other acquirements, he began to learn French and German, for in that Institution conversation was carried on in both these languages; and it may be that this circumstance contributed to foster his liking to foreign tongues, and may thus have had some remote influence, in after years, in deciding his mind toward China. At this place, too, his youthful affections were drawn out by the kindness of his instructors, and his mind developed amid pleasant scenery; his common excursions, even in seasons of recreation, being to such spots in the neighbourhood as Chatsworth or Welbeck Abbey. At this period he rose early, was thorough in the preparation of lessons, acted conscientiously, shewed great respect to the teachings of the Word of God, and observed the forms of godliness as others round him did. Many would have thought that he had the fear of God before his eyes. It was not so, however, at that period, though the Lord was keeping abundant mercy for him. The instrumentality employed in bringing about his change was of various kinds, as is perhaps most frequently the case with the Lord’s work in conversion. He himself, in reference to agents employed by the Lord in effecting such changes, made the interesting remark in after years to a friend at Jordanhill—” It is just like a large vessel returning laden with goods; it will be found at last that every individual believer has had a share in the ingathering of souls. As for myself, when

letting down the Gospel-net, I always feel that other believers are letting it down along with me."

We have his own testimony that he lived eighteen years without God. Thus, in 1849, he writes in looking back : -

"For eighteen years of my life I believe that I was truly without the knowledge of God. During all that time, my conduct was never influenced by the thought of His existence as a person, or of any thing I did being pleasing or displeasing to Him. Assuredly I worshipped as the heathen at Athens, an 'unknown God;' or as the Samaritans, I 'knew not what.' Anything like a knowledge of Him was a vague, undefined sense or fear of future retribution for evil done, and that a God, a powerful Being, would inflict it.

"An undefined sense of duty, my parents, masters, emulation among my fellow-pupils, carnal lusts, and above all - 'self;' these, I believe, were my gods; at least, they held all the place where God should have been.

"I was dissatisfied or happy, entirely as I managed to please or displease them. Of the worship due to Jehovah, the God of Abraham, I was as ignorant as a stock or stone." On 4th April 1852, he takes a similar review of the past :—" This day corresponds to the Sabbath of my new birth. I still bitterly repent the time I spent in Satan's service. It is unmingled bitterness: I went smoothly on in utter disregard of Christ. I never honoured Him as God, as my Creator, my Judge, and my risen Redeemer. I was a decent rebel, outwardly respectable, but in reality a despiser of Christ." And yet from infancy he had been taught by his parents the way of salvation, and had been moving among those who not only knew the Lord, but also adorned the Gospel by their holy life. Often does he refer, at a later period, to his mother's prayers and anxious yearnings over him in those days; sometimes to books put into his hands; and also to faithful ministers whose preaching of Christ and His salvation he felt to be impressive. Still for eighteen years his soul was dead to God. In the years 1839 and 1840, the ministry of Mr Millar, then minister of St Leonard's, Perth (now of the Free Church at Clunie), and next that of Mr Milne, his successor, produced a considerable impression on his mind, which was deepened by attending the services conducted by Mr W. C. Burns, now missionary in China, during a season of revival. It was only then that he began to see what the sinner is by nature, and what is the way of escape. A friend remembers meeting him and his two brothers in the lobby of the church, after a sermon by Mr Burns on the words—" Deliver from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom;" and how, with a solemn expression of countenance, he said, "I never knew till to-night what my Saviour did for me." Sacramental seasons also, at that period, used to give an impulse to his feelings. For about two years he remained in this half- awakened state. In December 1842, he came to Glasgow to learn business. Blameless from infancy to the world's eye, ever ready to shew kindness to others, kept, too, by the hand of a gracious God from all outward vice, and even the appearance of evil, nevertheless he was, and knew that he was, unconverted. He had gone only so far as nature may go; he was not born of God. One step onward he seemed to take in Glasgow— namely, he was taught the lesson of the world's utter insufficiency to give the soul what it craves. "He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again," was his experience.

He maintained the form of prayer, and even of Christian converse, with those with whom he boarded. The ministration of Mr Somerville of Anderston, whom he had fixed on as his pastor, interested him, and roused his soul from time to time; while visits to a circle of Christian friends, to

whom he was introduced, contributed to keep the things of salvation more and more before his mind. Then came the memorable Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1843. Having carefully watched the progress of the great controversy, he had no hesitation in following his minister out of the Establishment, and in giving his hearty adherence to the principles of the Free Church, persuaded as he was that the Free Church held the truth by which the Great Head of the Church is honoured, and might therefore expect His blessing. In the beginning of April 1844, being about to leave Glasgow, he called upon Mr Somerville, who took the opportunity of frankly inquiring into the state of his soul. The conversation made such an impression on his mind, that he has recorded part of it in his journal :—" You say" (said Mr Somerville to him) "that you do not care for the world—that it is not that which keeps you from Christ, or anything connected with it. You have now been more than a year in this place. You came anxious about your spiritual state, and you go away in the same manner. How long is this to continue? If it is nothing in the world that prevents your coming to Christ, it must be the unwillingness of your own heart." He then added, "I would beseech you not to rise from your chair till you have accepted Christ's free, full, and open offer of salvation to all who will come to Him!" Both the words and the solemn earnestness with which they were spoken affected him deeply. It was an interview which he never ceased to remember. In this state of soul he returned to Springland. The time of the dispensation of the Lord's Supper was drawing on, which naturally led his mother to say to him, "David, did you ever give yourself to Christ? You have no right to remain one week without loving Him." His pastor also, Mr Milne, met him, and urged on him the duty of professing his faith in the Lord Jesus, by taking his place in the number of communicants. He objected, specially stating his fear of bringing dishonour on the cause of Christ by his inconsistency, as well as the difficulty he felt regarding his personal state. This same month his eighteenth birthday came round, in connection with which a thought had been very seasonably presented to his mind by a passage in Angell James's "Father's Present to his Children "—a passage in which it is remarked that the usual time when persons decide for the Lord, or for the world, is from the age of fourteen to eighteen. "I felt," says he, "as if this might be the case with me." The fact that the Lord's Supper was to be dispensed in the congregation roused his conscience to the anxious inquiry, Am I in a state fit for that ordinance? His honest conclusion was that he could not go to the Lord's table, for as yet he was not willing unreservedly to give himself to the Lord. "I was still rejecting" (these are his words) "the waiting Saviour's free calls to come. I was wilfully sinning against what I knew so well. I was an open rebel, so much the guiltier because brought up near Him, and so well acquainted with His law." On the Sabbath evening, with these feelings disquieting him, he had engaged in prayer with his sister, and retired to his room. Then it was that the Lord found the sheep that was lost, and laid it on His shoulder. While pondering alone on his spiritual condition, his heart was drawn out "by the omnipotent hand of God" to think simply of Christ, and the "willingness of Christ to receive all who have a true wish to come to Him." He says he knew that this wish was not of man, but of the Holy Ghost ; (John 1:12-13) it was the Lord who enabled him now to take Christ as all his salvation and all his desire. That was the evening (7th April) when he for the first time felt his soul cast anchor on the Rock of Ages.

Hear his strains of adoring gratitude :—" The Lord God Almighty, the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Ghost, the triune Jehovah, be praised, be eternally glorified!" "I may henceforth call God my hope, my only hope, my life, my death (for I would as it were fall asleep in Him), my all! O the high, the mighty, the glorious work of salvation! How it sinks man, and raises and exalts the God of

salvation !”

Soon after we find him saying that his short experience has already given him proof of his heart’s proneness to depart even from this God of love, and that he could not of himself continue for a single instant abiding there. But here is his prayer—” O my soul, expect everything from the Lord Jesus. He is encircling thee in his arms of love, ever watching to preserve thee from danger.” And very remarkable it is to find one characteristic of all his after course at once beginning to develop itself—namely, his sense of the immense importance of prayer. “Continually, in prayer, ask his direction. Thou hast as it were only to whisper, or rather breathe, complete dependence upon Him, and ask Him to work for thee, by thee, through thee, and He will do what seemeth Him good.”

Having come to Christ, he must join those who can say, “My beloved is mine.” Accordingly, he sat down at the Lord’s table, seven days after this, in St Leonard’s Free Church, presided over by his beloved friend Mr Milne. His entrance into the marvellous light had been distinct and clear. His experience at this period is such as calls up to our thoughts the spiritual history of one of our fathers, Fraser of Brea. At the age of eighteen, this man of God heard intimation made that the Lord’s Supper was to be dispensed next Lord’s day, which led him to solemn searching regarding his fitness to go to that ordinance. He wished to go, and know that he ought to go; but then he also knew that he ought to be converted first, and feared that if he went in a Christless state “he might give over hopes of ever thereafter being converted.” Full of these thoughts, he, before the Sabbath came, set himself to seek the Lord Jesus. While thus alone in his closet, solemnly considering the state of his soul, the Lord enabled him all at once to perceive that Christ was a Saviour indeed—a full Saviour, the sinner’s Saviour, gloriously complete in His work and in His offices, because so glorious in His person, and no less glorious in His love and grace. “Where am I now ! what is this !” were his first words of adoring wonder. “Heart and hand, and all that I have, is thine! Begone, poor world !” Next Sabbath found him seated at the table of his Lord.

03.02. First Year After Conversion

Chapter 2 The First Year after Conversion "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?"

Psalms 116:12

Neither strangers nor friends could fail to notice something sombre in his character in his early days. But after his conversion, this shade no longer hung on his brow. One who knew him well remarked, “It was the love of Jesus which first put that smile on his face which never left it.” For a time, even after his bark was safely in the haven, he had the heavings, if not the tossings, of the tempest that chased him into his refuge; but certain it is, that from the day he was able to say, “I know whom I have believed,” his was a joyous countenance, so much so, that you might have pointed to him as a most obvious illustration of the apostolic injunction, “Rejoice in the Lord always.” The glory of God in the face of Jesus shed gladness through his heart, a gladness that his companions often took notice of, and which they felt to be infectious.

We saw one of his characteristics, viz., prayerfulness, beginning to shew itself on the very night of his conversion. It was not long ere another distinctive trait appeared, viz, the desire to be of use to others. With him it was first liberty, then service; the work not of the hireling seeking to purchase freedom, but of the son serving the father whom he loved. Perhaps his early zeal approached the borders of censoriousness; his light flung out sparks, but soon it burnt upward with a calm, steady flame.

We left him at the Communion Table. See him now rising from it to go forth and work for his Lord. The question of personal acceptance had been first settled, and now there followed the grateful acknowledgment of the accepted soul in the full surrender of all his life to the service of the Redeemer. One met him coming from the communion table and asked, “Were you happy ?” “So happy that I fear to trust it. What a salvation! Shall not life be spent in proclaiming it ?” This utterance of his soul in that hour of bliss was embodied in action during all his after days. We may fancy him singing with Toplady, “Loved of my God, for him again With love intense I burn !”

Immediately after we find him noting down, in the review of his past life, “I have already lived two years and 208 days of Sabbaths !” Then follow the two first entries in his journal, which present to us the traits of his spiritual character, that all along so distinctly marked him out from most others, viz., prayerfulness, and labour for souls. Thus he writes :—

“May 6.—I wish that more progress were visible; but it is in truth a pure impossibility for man, in his own strength, to begin or to maintain a walk with God. My evil passions and wicked heart are continually interfering and leading me off, almost before I am aware of it. it is only by a continual renewing of my covenant with Christ, trusting everything to Him and nothing to myself, that I can ever expect to walk as I ought; and from this must follow a most rigid watching over my heart and conduct to others. PRAY WITHOUT CEASING.”

These words are found written in the original Greek, “Adialeiptos proseuchesthe,” on a slip of paper that lay in his desk and the initial letters “a.p.” may be tracked throughout his notebooks.

“O Lord, give me a more earnest prayerful spirit for my dear unconverted friends. If I would but think seriously of their condition, that each of them is continually fighting against his Lord, inflicting new wounds on Jesus’s breast, and yet it is the very hand which they are wounding that prevents them dropping into everlasting misery! How can I rest one moment while I do assuredly know that such is the case. O Lord Jesus, shew but Thy face to them, shew them their terrible, awful condition and certain doom, if they remain indifferent, shew them but a spark of Thy incomprehensible love, and O then how they will be changed! Thou holdest every man’s heart in Thy hand, O Lord; if it be Thy will, change their hearts. Would it not be for Thy everlasting glory? Will they not have longer to praise and glorify Thee? O Lord, give me no rest till I have done all that man can do. Let me be often pouring forth earnest supplications for them. And surely I cannot doubt but that Thou wilt be graciously pleased to answer: ‘for this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us.” And now, having found “the joy of salvation,” he can say, “I will teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee” (Psalms 51:13). For his faith was aggressive; he did not content himself with “sitting under his vine and fig-tree,” but (as Israel shall do in the day of their return), he also “called his neighbour” to enjoy the same refreshing fruit and shade (Zechariah 3:10).

“Monday, May 26.—I have been trying to speak to several persons about their eternal state, but see well that it is only by God speaking through me that it can be of the smallest benefit to their souls.” At the same time, he in no way relaxes his vigilance over his own soul. My father presented me with a Bible, which I hope will incite me to greater diligence in searching the Scriptures. I have to grieve over the continual changes in my religious feelings and affections, At times Jesus enables me to feel supremely happy in Him, while often a few hours after I seem to have everything to begin again, and from some evil imagination of my heart, I feel as it were estranged from Jesus. This must be meant to teach me that I must be ever looking to Him, incessantly watching and praying, never withdrawing my hand from a firm hold of His merciful, His gracious arm. This constant vagrant disposition of my mind shews truly what the natural heart is. It is made of carnality, which is enmity against God, and is therefore ever making efforts to draw away from God. This truth is what, I believe, every one who is Christ’s will be taught, and will have it graven upon his heart, as with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond. O Lord, change my nature from that of a sinful man to that of the meek and lowly Jesus! Thou must work the change; look at thine own Son Jesus, and do Thou it for His sake.”

Another effort follows.

“June 6.—I have taken up a class for young men and was pleased to see four at our meeting. Resolved, in God’s strength and with His help, always if possible to engage alone in prayer before commencing to read, teach, or pray with any one, on these all important subjects.”

Just at this period, the Life of Harlan Page, which his mother put into his hands, attracted his special attention. In reading it, he was very greatly impressed; his hopes of being used by God in saving souls received a great impulse. At the same time, he noted carefully that Harlan Page was not blessed without earnestly praying for it, being instant in prayer for unconverted friends, as well as taking opportunity to write to them and speak with them; availing himself also, of openings that

occurred for prayer meetings and classes. On laying down the book, a book to which he often resorted, this was his prayer :—

“Lord, who holdest the hearts of all men in Thy right hand, do Thou be pleased to make me, by Thy grace, a means of bringing poor, careless, and dying sinners to the Rock of Ages, and make me indefatigable in labouring for their conversion; prevent my heart from becoming cold in this work, and my zeal from flagging, for it is Thy work and not mine.” Soon after, his soul rejoices in his work begun.

“June 10.—Thanks be to God, for I think He has enabled me to feel as a hired servant, as a servant bought with a price, and staying all upon Him, to await His shewing me the path by following which I may be enabled to do most to His glory.” The thought of unsaved souls hangs heavy on his mind.

“June 12.—O Lord, give me such thoughts of the awful condition of unconverted sinners, that I may not cease from continually warning them of their imminent danger, that they may flee from the wrath to come. How awful to think that the spirits of any of those within my reach should rise up in judgment against me, and say that I had not told them the truth. Some to whom I have spoken seem to be anxious, and particularly some of the cottars. May this be but the beginning of the falling of a dew from heaven.” And now we have his statement of his experience in regard to the healthful influence, upon his own soul, of all efforts made in behalf of others. Again and again, in after days, does he make similar statements. He gave what he received, and in giving got more.

“June 18.—I find that unless I am continually doing something for the souls of unthinking sinners, my love becomes cold, and a deadening effect is the result, which soon spreads into everything.” Yet it was not easy for the flesh at first, though ultimately he won the victory. “I have to grieve,” says he, “over a feeling of unwillingness, and even irksomeness, to go and speak to persons about their eternal salvation. Am I stone? Am I hardened as adamant? How can I allow such feelings to gain the mastery; they are called natural, but are they natural? If these persons were in imminent danger of falling a prey to wild beasts in the desert, would I not flee to their rescue? O Lord, touch this heart which is so cold and senseless. Thy countenance can make it ever full of love for deluded sinners.”

After again perusing Harlan Page, he writes :— “When on my deathbed, how will every effort., every trial to bring souls to Jesus, seem cold and lifeless. O for the mind of the Lord when He wept over Jerusalem Give me, Lord Jesus, a heart to weep for poor sinners, a heart to bleed for poor sinners, a heart to pour out itself in prayer for poor sinners. Thou knowest the weakness and coldness of my pleadings for unconcerned sinners. O give me faith, give me love, burning, unquenchable love to do all I can in God’s strength to convince those living without Thee, that they are wilfully throwing themselves into destruction, that they are of their own free will casting from them everlasting salvation, and embracing eternal damnation. O that I had a forehead as Ezekiel, ‘as adamant harder than flint,’ that I might speak the Lord’s will to every man.”

There was nothing of bondage in David Sandeman’s unceasing service; his was the filial obedience of one who, by Christ, could enter the Holiest of all, and could look up to the Holy One and cry, “Abba, Father.” This confidence in his Lord, this boldness to enter by the blood of Jesus, this assurance of the acceptance of his person in the Beloved, and therefore of his services, was

the secret spring of that untiring delight he manifested in waiting for his God. Let us hear him speak on this point. He has been reading a little book, “Glimpses into the World to Come,” by a young friend, George Philips, and here are his remarks “George Philips’s case remarkably shews that God must be sought only through the merits of Jesus. For six years he was concerned about his soul, and could obtain no peace. But then he yielded much to going in with irreligious friends in trifling, and for long had not resolution to tell them boldly why he would no longer join with them. A more prolonged and chief occasion of his want of peace was his looking to his frames, and confiding in the earnestness of his prayers as the ground of his acceptance with God; and it was only when he saw the freeness of the Gospel offer, made only through the blood of Jesus, and when all suspicions of God were removed, that peace flowed into his mind, and that but shortly before his death.” His first visit to a cottage on the errand of salvation, is thus recorded :—

“Went for first time this evening to address a man and his wife on their eternal condition. During prayer, felt strong desire that what I said might not be made the savour of death unto death to their souls. After leaving them, I felt so strongly the awful condition of lost unthinking sinners, that I was constrained to go and speak to some of the cottars, particularly one family of whom I had heard.”

Once more we see what had to be overcome ere he attained the freedom and readiness to deal with souls that afterwards he reached. Let it encourage others.

“I now feel the inward hardness of the heart more than formerly, and that languor formerly referred to as stealing over the soul when once active work for God is intermitted. It is undoubtedly the case that there is a secret reluctance to speak plainly to unthinking men, unless we are specially endued with a sense of eternal things, and that so strongly as to conquer the natural evil of the heart. But if there is much secret striving with God, and then going in His strength boldly to the work, many a seeming difficulty will vanish; we are strengthened above what we thought for, and a sense of divine things experienced brighter and clearer than ever before. God seems indeed to have wonderfully connected praying and acting. If we pray to be enabled to speak the truth to dying sinners, and do not, if we have any opportunity, engage actively in doing something for them, the effect on our mind begins to lessen. It is saying ‘I go,’ and going not. Many Christians seem to be left to fall into a lethargic state from this cause.” The dependence of spiritual health on efforts for the souls of others being with him a principle of action, he scarcely ever took even a walk for relaxation without distributing tracts, and asking the people to pray over them. He used to say he did not enjoy a walk without having done something in the course of it for the good of souls.

Another breathing.

“June 25.—O Lord, assist me this night, if it be Thy will I should address some careless sinners. O Lord my God, fill me with prayer, with heart-bleedings for sinners! May we take heaven by violence for them. Time flies, and souls are flying to hell. I must pray more for a sense of what the loss of a single soul actually is. Who is sufficient for these things ?”

Then follows a holy resolution: “Never to speak to any one without trying to say something directly, either for the spiritual advancement of my own soul or of theirs, if conscientiously I can find an opportunity, remembering ‘where there is a will there is a way.”

He was now about to leave Springland, that he might enter on business in Manchester. With this in prospect, he says :—

“July 11.—The Lord has, in His abundant mercy, brought me to see this, the third month of my being in Him. My heart is hard as the nether millstone, else it would be continually sounding forth the praises of the love of the Lord Jesus. I would be ever meditating and speaking of such wondrous, incomprehensible love. O Lord, give me but a clear sight of my Saviour, and then my heart must melt down. What urgent need I have to apply more at God’s throne; to keep nearer to Jesus as my only strength.”

“July 1. —The first person I ever visited with the end of profiting, or being profited, was Mrs M., Quarry Mill. Almost four years ago my sister began to visit her, she being confined to bed by bodily debility. About the same time, one who had obtained peace of mind went to her and spoke to her. She did not wonder at my sister speaking so, because she was of superior station; but when this servant girl so spoke it astonished her, and her conscience told her that no more than the truth was said. She now rejoices in her only Saviour.” The same evening he writes—” I find I must watch that efforts for the salvation of souls do not turn away my mind from my own spiritual state. Today I have been engaged, as I am on the eve of leaving home, in visiting the cottagers from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

“I am now about to go to England. O that the Lord would meet with me as He did with Jacob, and bless me, then would I go forth joyfully. O God, my God, go forth with me, and I will fear none ill. O direct my path in everything. Make a bright shining light to mark the road that leads me to the Lamb, so that I may not swerve to the right hand or to the left. Thou, O Lord, hast dealt very mercifully with me in giving me such a long breathing season. I am but a weak lamb; unless Thou bear me up, I must soon fall. May I every day wax stronger and stronger, ‘looking unto Jesus;’ then I cannot fail.

“While I am on my way to Manchester, I will have much in my power in speaking to former associates. O Lord, enable me to make opportunities! May I always have before mine eyes either to give or receive profit, with whomsoever I meet.” On arriving at Manchester:—

“Sunday Evening, July 28—Have much cause of thankfulness to the Lord for His many kindnesses to me since coming here. For some days my heart felt cast down, as I have been doing nothing for that merciful God who has done so much for me. But since then He has been pleased to shew me that I have been impatient, and not relying enough on His ever faithful arm. I see that in some cases I must wait till I have been here longer before speaking to persons, and then efforts will be more effectual; but neither, on the other hand, ought I to delay too long. But I have full cause to thank the Lord for the opportunities He gives me of engaging in His work. His having been pleased to put me under the charge of Mr G. Barbour, is a striking instance of His lovingkindness, for by this means I have been introduced into the Sabbath school, and thus again have opportunity of gaining admission into families to speak a word to them; and in Mr B. I have a friend with whom I may advise, and who by his efforts and conversation shews that his face is Zionward.”

Immediately on being settled, he began to distribute tracts in the neighbourhood. Finding that this formed a good opening for further acquaintance and visitation, the same evening he commenced visiting the houses of his Sabbath scholars. Amidst the routine of business his soul prospered; for he acted on the rule of Psalms 1:3, and so was like a tree planted by the waters.

“I find encouragement, at my daily occupations in the warehouse, from now and then taking out my Testament and reading over a few verses; and that, with perhaps a short prayer, gives me new vigour, and stimulates me to greater diligence in my duties. A great part of the day is necessarily consumed with affairs connected with this world; but in being thus engaged, I trust I am preparing a way for a greater opportunity of glorifying Him by acquiring the means of doing more good.”

“I find the little time at dinner very refreshing, for then I get a little of the Bible or some other good book read.”

Here is a solemn case:—

“I have passed perhaps the most solemn time this night that I have ever passed. I have been conversing with one to whom the Lord has not been pleased to manifest Himself. He said he knew well the willingness of Jesus to save him, but that there was an iron sinew in his neck which prevented him coming to Him; that he just felt that he was sin, and could not move to the Redeemer. I read and prayed with him about two hours; still his heart was rebellious and would not bend. Again and again in the Lord’s strength I besought him then to come with his heart as it was, and put it and all into Jesus’ hands, and yet he said that he could not. It was indeed solemn to be beside one who knew so well all the Bible truths and the freeness of the Gospel offer, and yet whose heart was so hardened, that all these fell like dumb words upon his soul. Let me not rest till he has obtained perfect peace in the Lord.” His first prayer-meeting in Manchester:—

“August 8.—Our first prayer-meeting was held to-night. Here may be the beginning of a great working among the dry bones. Let me remember that the blood of sinners lies at my door, if I warn them not night and day with tears, Acts 20:31, Ezekiel 33:8. O Lord, give me a realising sense of their condition, then will I go forth proclaiming the glorious plan of salvation and the terrific danger of remaining in sin. O for more of Harlan Page’s spirit. O when will prayer and effort, and effort and prayer, be the business of my life !” The time is now come when he sees his way opened to deal with those around him, in the same warehouse.

“August 9.—I have been waiting till I should prove myself diligent in business before beginning to speak to those around me about their souls, but now I must, by the arm of the Lord supporting me, begin to do something at the warehouse. If it please Him, I may be the instrument of bringing many souls to Him from among them, but to find and use opportunities will require much circumspection and prayer. Having this evening to myself I felt a disinclination to spend it in the work of the Lord. How soon does the heart grow cold in this service. I have been writing to a friend about his soul, after much prayer on his behalf.”

Yearning over a soul, he says :—

“16th August.—To-day, while thinking of writing to —, I felt my heart burn for poor sinners, and could not refrain from writing to him; which I did, leaving all in the hands of a mightier than I, and earnestly beseeching the blessing.”

Two days after this, he is sitting alone, musing on his Lord and His ways. The fire burns higher and higher. “What! has that Lord of all come down from heaven, and shewn me somewhat of such glorious love in my Lord and Redeemer! It is wonderful !— reason stands speechless—poor finite man stands confounded, ‘lost in wonder, love, and praise;’ the Lord alone can fathom the

bottomless depth of his love; the Lord, and He alone, can know it. O let me then praise Him! Praise Him, praise Him, my soul; praise God the Father, praise God the Saviour, praise God the Holy Ghost. Praise, praise, honour, and eternity of glories to the Almighty God, Triune Jehovah!

“My God and Father, give me more ardent love. Fill, O fill me with more love to such a Saviour! Everything within seems cold and dead, when the love of the Lord Jesus is made to shine. For, O how feeble must seem the little twinkling star of man’s cold love and colder heart, when brought in comparison with that love which burns as an infinity of suns !“

There is an expression used by the Prophet Hosea (Hosea 14:6), when telling of pardoned, accepted, freely loved Israel: “His smell shall be as Lebanon.” Travellers report that they have found not the cedars only, but every shrub and plant that clothes the sides of that majestic mountain, in the spring season, breathing forth fragrance; all are aromatic. Is it not so with all the words and ways of the pardoned and accepted soul? Was it not so with David Sandeman? But besides this, the natives of Lebanon tell us that if you collect the sap of the tall pine, or of the goodly cedar, and drop it into the flame, the fragrance is delightful as incense. Is not this like what we find in God’s believing ones? Their inner life, their thoughts, their deep-seated feelings, when circumstances develop them, have a fragrance of peculiar sweetness. It was so in the case of him whose motives and innermost frames of soul are here laid open. “The smell is as Lebanon.” But effort is now called forth in another direction.

“Wednesday, 2lst.—For the first time, spoke seriously and plainly to one of the warehousemen, and gave him two tracts. I trust this will prove a beginning to doing more for the precious souls which I am among. Speaking to him has made me happy; for day after day I have gone there, and done nothing for these souls. Pride, so far as I have seen, appears to be my besetting sin. It is surely in mercy that the Lord hides the desperate wickedness of my heart from my view, lest I should be overwhelmed in His holy presence.”

He again testifies to the reflex influence on his own soul of his endeavours to bless others.

“31st August.—I find almost invariably that the more I am engaged in doing something for the good of others, the happier I am in my mind.

“Going home I began to speak to a policeman, who was going the same way, with a view to the good of his soul.” At times he was led to take note of the evils within his own soul, and occasionally the conflict there was sore.

“1st September, Sunday.—Henry Martyn seems to have felt much the depravity of his heart. I fear I have scarce seen mine at all. I seem to have a sort of fear to examine into it, as if there were an unfathomable abyss thinly veiled.”

“2d September, Monday.—This morning, felt plainly the workings of pride, pride which brought down Satan. Walked home with a young man. He made the long hours of business an excuse for not attending to eternal things."

“3d September. —The wicked one has taken advantage of some things which I have read and heard of the Socinians, to infuse at times doubts into my mind. The mere handling of their views seems to leave a stain."

“2 o’clock.—My reason is plainly convinced that the Lord Jesus is God; still there seems to be something of the Satanic spirit within. O how awful is any feeling approaching to unbelief! How desolate it makes the heart, as if a stinging scorpion were lying there.

“Night.—I have sincere cause to praise the Lord that He has been mercifully pleased to deliver me from the power of the lion.”

He used the short time he had in his power at the dinner hour for snatching a look at the New Testament and for brief prayer. This refreshment cheered him on in his common employment. After one of these short seasons, he finds himself again among his fellow-clerks in the warehouse, and thus writes:—

“One of them spoke to me about predestination; another, a Roman Catholic, joined us. I proposed that we should look for a little at Romans 9:1-33.; and it did seem strange, three of us examining God’s word in such a place, in the midst of cloth, and noise, and bustle; the sight made me lift up my heart to the Lord in praise and humble prayer, that it might not be ineffectual for our good. In the evening tried to speak to another fellow-clerk; my heart was yearning for his soul’s welfare; for O the time is short, everything is hastening to an end, and then— unending eternity.” His zeal led his mind forth in all directions.

“8th September.—Spoke to a Particular Baptist in the warehouse, who holds very strong views on predestination. It seems to me that he dwells on this to the exclusion, in some measure, of man’s responsibility. Now, both are to be held; if the former only be considered, how manifestly must it cool every effort for the salvation of souls.

“Thursday, 12th September, 3.30 a.m.—I have remained up to this early hour writing to —, about our matter of controversy.”

Thinking over some of his visits to Perth, he notes the particulars of a case thus :—“ I never visited Mrs Y. till three weeks before leaving for Manchester. It was remarkable that, through carnal and sinful reasons, I had been at home three weeks before I went; and yet it pleased the Almighty to convince her soul, and then to bring her to Himself. She was almost wholly ignorant of Scripture, or at least of its meaning; for often during the course of the day she would come, Bible in hand, to ask of a neighbour what this or that passage meant. Since then, I believe, she holds on her way.” This is dated September 17. On September 19, another is mentioned who “at first was rather hardened by the loss of her children; and then led by it to the true Comforter. She had had hard thoughts of God.” An entry, 25th September, takes special notice of the thought of the ministry having taken hold of his mind, and of the joy it gave him even to look forward to the possibility of entering on that path. But the following general observation about his feelings is interesting in itself:—” Find that whilst in my unconverted days impressions seemed a kind of burden, often falling off, now another hand preserves them.”

Other thoughts occur about the same time, shewing the healthy tone and vigour of his spiritual being. We are giving merely samples.

“27th September.—I have lately been looking forward with some joy to that happy departure from this world and being with Christ, which is far better. O what a sovereign balm for every wound is that; it often enlivens the solitariness of my lodging.

“1st October, Tuesday.—I have now been able to get three in the warehouse to learn a verse every morning. My heart was enlivened by the two ‘hookers’ coming to me and repeating their verses; one of them was a Roman Catholic.

“2d October, Wednesday.—That arch enemy pride, I fear, wars against me.”

Joy and edification, as the result of dealing with souls, were his constant experience now.

“8th October, Tuesday.—-Called upon Davis, and heard him praying while he did not know of it. He seemed to be truly pouring out his soul, and it was affecting to hear one so engaged who may be so near death. The Irish accent was very strong, which added simplicity to it. In prayer, after visiting him and another dying man, felt much solemnised. It is when the Lord is pleased thus to solemnise my heart, that prayer draws my soul into heaven, and I feel unwilling to desist.

“Again and again I find it confirmed, that the more I am engaged in working for the Lord, the more do heavenly and becoming thoughts fill my heart. It is this which inclines me much to the ministry. I do at times sincerely wish that my heart, time, and all, were given wholly to the service of the Redeemer. It would be my joy and felicity to be spent wholly in working for Him; and this, I trust, is not mere enthusiasm, but the calm and full purpose of my heart. I have been earnestly praying that if it be His will the Lord would open a way for me. How my heart glows at the thought of my poor unworthy services being entirely devoted to Him who has washed me, who has justified me, who has sanctified, and will sanctify me more and more.”

Becoming more and more impressed with the persuasion, that the Lord might open up to him that entrance into the ministry which he so longed for, he writes in his journal that he is fully aware of the many difficulties he must in that case encounter, but he has weighed the best manner of meeting every difficulty, and trial, and discouragement that maybe awaiting him. “Looking unto Jesus,” says he, “would be my motto in the beginning—Looking unto Jesus, my motto in advancing—Looking unto Jesus, my motto in storming the breach—Looking unto Jesus, my motto in falling, sword in hand, did He so decree. Lord, give me light !” It is soon after this that he writes—” I trust God is becoming far more of a companion to me.”

We next find him blaming himself for speaking and acting as if he were already an established believer instead of a new-born babe. Then we find him on his way to the Lord’s table, saying, “All I can expect in this world is pain and struggle, rising and falling, seeming to be nearly vanquished, and then, in the glorious strength of my Redeemer, conquering all enemies. Whether as a merchant or as a minister, I may fully expect such trials as these. Let nothing therefore move me.” On 13th October occurs a breathing of delight at the idea of a soul saved by his instrumentality. “Have had the joyful news to-day, that — is inquiring very seriously, and in a way that shews that the blessed Spirit is at work within. How unspeakably precious is the godly sorrow of one poor sinner, which gives the angels a hymn of praise.” Two days after this, he records at some length his views regarding the proposed change in his profession, prefacing it with the words, “May I consider it as if I were on my death-bed !” What weighed with him most powerfully was the consideration, that a merchant cannot so give himself up to live and die wholly for the Lord, as a ‘minister of the Gospel ‘may— although the merchant in a sphere of his own may largely glorify God. After this he writes

“Evening, 22d October. - I feel at present as standing in the market-place, ready to be hired. May the Lord Jesus come forth from His vineyard, and although it may be said to be with me the eleventh hour, invite me, nay, draw me in, to be one of his labourers. Whether merchant or minister, let me remember the day is far spent, and that we are near the end of the journey. If he has chosen me for his minister, O for that grace and truth which come from above; for that holy anointing for His own special work. Why wait the wheels of His chariot? Yet I see that the lesson of waiting in prayer must be learnt. The Lord alone can direct the path of His servants. Now they must seemingly stand still; again, they must press forward with the fullest vigour. At one time, in the eyes of the world, they may seem to be over cautious, and fearful of advancing; at another, they may seem to be enthusiasts.

“25th October.—With Christian friends I have sometimes a pure unalloyed and hallowed enjoyment, which I scarcely thought was given to creatures here on earth. Truly the world knows nothing of this communion. I never imagined such, till the Lord was pleased to renew my heart.”

He is not abating in his pursuit of holiness, for we find him recording :—

“28th October, Monday.—In the morning tried to have solemn thoughts, as soon as I arose, by repeating and praying the 63d Psalm. Grieved to find that I do not awake with a greater sense of divine things upon my mind. I fear this shews there is little true sanctification of the thoughts and intents of the heart”

Once more: “I have much reason to thank the Lord for the persuasion he has given me in my own mind, with regard to the ministry. I pray that as soon as the way is properly clear, I may enter with my whole soul into the work. Poor perishing souls, why will they not be warned? O if that vast word ‘Eternity’ were more in my heart, how wholly different would be my walk and conversation! I fear I never realise what eternal death means.”

“I think that the best criterion of the effect of private devotion, public ordinances, or religious converse, is, how does it dispose one for self-denying effort? Were this question put when the heart seemed softened with some view of holy things, it might often appear that natural feeling has mingled. This test must be a true one, for when should the believer’s soul be so strong for duty, as when his Redeemer sends forth the rays of His love?”

Very characteristic are his words, when he resolves —“To act as if there were no other human being with me, as if I alone bore the standard; and yet to watch for and hail any who seem to strive to bear the standard, and take him by the right hand.” For his was a genial nature, thriving in the atmosphere of brotherly love~

Here is an important reiteration of a testimony :— “I never feel my soul so much trusting in the Lord my righteousness, as after trying to warn some poor one from the sleep of death, or to comfort some follower of the Lamb. I have so often experienced this, that it seems strange I should ever forget it. There is a heartfelt enjoyment of peace and a resting upon Him, which far surpasses any feeling I ever experienced while wandering from the blessed Shepherd of the flock. It is at such times as these that a strong proof of the Lord having indeed made me one of His is presented to my mind. For there is such a peaceful quiet within, that none can feel it unless the Lord has sent it, especially if, on examination, there is no particular outward cause to produce it.. In going to the warehouse, and passing through the crowded street, nothing was permitted to come between my

soul and my God." And here is an important statement of a fact :—

"Find new opportunities every day at the warehouse of speaking a word in season; the longer there, the more such seem to open. I will leave the profession of merchant, deeply convinced of the many opportunities afforded him if he has the true wish of glorifying the Lord. Yet is the ministry more honourable than this, and still more opportunities are found in it" But now the time came when his highest wish was to be gratified. On November 19th, he is taking farewell of the poor whom he used to visit. At last, he is ready to start. "O may He be my staff and my rod! May this ever be before my eyes, and written upon my heart, GOD, WHOSE I AM, AND WHOM I SERVE. I am now no longer my own; the world must now be cast behind. May I be directed on the road to duty. Let this day be ever remarkable in my life."

Just as he was thus leaving Manchester, he heard of one to whom he seemed to have been savingly blessed. It led him to write :—" Felt that important principle confirmed to-day, that the more I engage in duty, the more I am glad with a holy joy." Need we wonder at this? Surely not; for thus it is that a man is kept from looking at self, and guided to a more constant gaze at Christ, to whom he points others. And we get a little into the secret of his steady cheerfulness when we find him remarking :—" Have been considering the subject of assurance. I believe that the Christian who possesses it is in the best position for active effort to the glory of God: as he is thus free from his own problem to care for the souls of others. And surely it is most scriptural, for we find the Apostles ever rejoicing in the love of Christ, and exhorting whole churches to do the same."

We now go with him to Edinburgh, where he arrived November 27.; and three days after he is found as before, at his heavenly Father's business. For we read—

"30th November.—Attended a prayer meeting of the Students' Missionary Association. Have been much interested in the life of J. Brainerd Taylor. He was a merchant also till nineteen. He seems to have felt a distaste for business itself, which I cannot say was the case with me, nor do I know that there is any line of life I would not have been ready to pursue, had duty led to it. With him I pray that the Lord would make me a Christian eminent for holiness and devotedness. I would desire not to take any man as my model, but only the Lamb of God. May He grant me a great anointing for His most holy office."

Soon after he is found joining with a few others in a prayer meeting for revival in the congregation. Then he writes :—" I would humbly praise God for the change which, I trust, has been wrought in me. He has restored in some measure to my soul the light of His countenance. The Holy Scriptures have been sweet to my taste to-day. The Psalms especially seemed to beam with light. This morning while returning from visiting, Jesus seemed to draw near to me. I had just to lift up my heart, and He gave me peace in Him. I longed to go aside and pray, but had no time. Still I could not help stopping by the roadside, and felt the true joy arising from the feeling of lying passive in the Saviour's arms."

Here is watchfulness.

"7th December.—Began to repeat the 42d Psalm as soon as I arose, and engaged in prayer. This I often find beneficial, by the mind being led into a serious frame as soon as I awake.'

Here is self-examination.

“Monday, 9th—I cannot point so much to one glaring sin that should make me mourn, it is just the corruption of the whole inward man; a constant tendency to estrange myself from the Lord, by neglecting to be ever striving to keep near Him.”

Here he glorifies God in his studies.

“13th December.—It is very delightful when I am enabled to sit down to Cicero or to Greek, with my heart’s purpose being to glorify God. It is oftentimes very refreshing to lift up my heart in prayer before taking the book in my hands, and commending myself unto Him who careth for us."

“17th December.—Attending meeting of students of divinity engaged in Home Mission work. This is my first mixing with the students, and engaging more immediately for God’s glory. The Lord has given me some love to souls; but O why so little yearning after the Lord Jesus! Were he to put the question to me which be put to Peter, ‘Lovest thou me?’ I fear it would be asked but once.

“8th January.—My time is at present very much engrossed by study. To-day, from half-past seven a.m. till ten at night, I was engaged in study, and yet the Lord shewed me that He is able to keep my heart in peace with Him: for often during my studies, I was able to lift up my soul in calm resting upon Him. The quiet and sweetness I experience at times is what formerly, when dwelling afar from the Lord, I was an utter stranger to. It is not a boisterous joy, nor even elation, but a calm quiet, which seems to pervade every feeling of the soul. I think I can trace this to my being more in prayer while at college and in the various classes. Let this be an encouragement to me to strive to live in prayer; and in order to this, let me ever remember not to begin the business of any class till I have prayed to the Lord to keep me, and to bless to me what I learn while there.

“Attended Dr Candlish ’s class for the Confession of Faith. Subject: ‘The Decrees of God and Election.’ In the course of the day, I find myself speaking and acting too much as if I were an established follower of my Lord, instead of manifesting that humble, childlike deportment which ought to characterise the newborn babe. Passed some time with a soul who is still looking within, instead of without, to the cross of Immanuel.

“My heart is apparently wholly devoid of that melting tenderness and fervent love to my crucified Redeemer which ought to fill me. O to be delivered from this body of death ! When will the Day Star, the Bright and Morning Star, arise upon my soul, and the love of the Saviour, without resistance, be shed abroad within me? I long for such a time. O that I could forget every one else, and every thing else in the world, and join the seraph band in singing to His praise, the bountiful Giver of all good! Every estrangement is only the working of that great enemy sin, mortal sin. How black must my heart seem in the eye of the Lord, with whom I have to do. Lord Jesus, come into my soul, and enable me to love Thee more and more.” In crossing from Leith to Kirkcaldy, on his way to a few days’ visit at Springland, he writes :—“ Was obliged to rebuke three men for their disgraceful conversation; but it was done in a cowardly manner. Spoke at last to a gentleman inside the coach a few words as to the necessity of seeking to lay hold on the only true foundation, Christ Jesus. The cowardly feeling I experienced was very great, wholly unworthy of one who professes to have relinquished the world, and therefore should regard neither its laugh nor frown. I am far from being a bold soldier in my Master’s cause.” And here is a prayer at this time, and the solution of a difficulty :—“ I prayed to be kept in remembrance of my three mottoes :—

‘LOOKING UNTO JESUS.’

‘MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR THEE’

‘WHOSE I AM, AND WHOM I SERVE.’

I am sometimes at a loss as to the priority of various duties, which should hold the first place, and which should be postponed. At present these three manifest duties lie before me: 1st, Religion in my own soul; 2d, Preparation in all its forms for the ministry; 3d, The conversion of near relations and neighbours.”

It is thus he enters upon another year :—

“New Year’s Day, 1st January 1845, Springland.—The year has been begun in prayer. How blessed would it be if it were a whole year of prayers. O for grace from my God to pray without ceasing. In a letter from my sister lately, she said, ‘Do not come to terms with your corruptions. Give no quarter to sin, and take none, till you set your feet within the New Jerusalem.’

“O to learn more from Jesus of His own glorious Person! Show me, Lord, more of Thy wondrous love. Fill the void which I feel to be in my soul.

“I sometimes think whether or not it may be God’s will that I should enter the ministry on earth. Many are cut off in their prime. J. Brainerd Taylor was cut down when about to enter on the work of preaching the Gospel, and he, as I, left business. May I ever remember this solemn consideration” And thus he girds his loins: -

“22d February.—Rose at 4 a.m. for reading the word and prayer. Could not get near the Lord in prayer. and was made to walk the rest of the day in somewhat of the spirit of humility, yet felt that it had strengthened me and that it gave me a feeling of stability. Found to-day how ill my proud heart could bear reproof:” His studies go on, and yet his soul is not really suffering loss :—“ To-day felt much calm joy of heart in leaving my Greek for a little and kneeling down to pray. How sweet the refreshment at such a season to the whole inward man. It spreads a peaceful serenity over the heart which nothing from an earthly source can equal. Perhaps the nearest approach to it is Christian friendship, but this I find mixed with many alloys. Communing with God is alone pure without mixture; it is a foretaste of the eternal joy.” On March 3. he gained the prize for recitation at the Humanity Class in the College, taught by Professor Pillans. But his delight in meditating on the word of God increased. “16th March.—The majesty of God’s word is truly great; so like the language of the Creator of the universe. Have been reading lately some of Solomon’s Song, and find it very suitable to my own.

“Wednesday, March 19.—Have experienced more pleasure in reading the Scriptures to-day than I ever remember before. Have begun to learn John’s Gospel by heart. How placid and kind the manner in which Jesus speaks to the first apostles, ‘What seek ye ?’ He said unto them, ‘Come and see;’ when they, trembling, no doubt, were following Him, for they seem to have been afraid to come up with Him. And then, no doubt, walking between them, He took them to His own house—perhaps some small room surrounded by carpenters’ tools. And then the kind welcome given to Nathaniel is very touching. How beautifully does the character of Jesus shine forth in these little narratives, and yet, little as they are, giving manifold proof of His being a Divine Person. Simon Peter’s character he knew at once. Nathaniel was known to be an Israelite in whom was no guile. When he thought no eye had seen him, Jesus had been present and with him under the

fig-tree.”

Somewhere about this time, a letter that he wrote a school companion was made a blessing; or rather, a letter which he had written to that friend from Manchester now began to bear fruit in his soul. The young man said, that from that date, whenever he thought of religion, his mind somehow reverted to Mr Sandeman. For a time he quieted his conscience by saying, “Some shall be taken, and others left What then could he do ?“ But he was led on to cry more earnestly to the Lord. One Sabbath, after hearing a sermon on faith, he went home and prayed, “Lord, increase my faith !“ and his eyes were opened. He wrote to Mr Sandeman telling him the happy story. It may be mentioned here, that at a future date he visited Mr S., who has this instructive record concerning him :— “H. G. visited me. The first day or two he was all joy together. This, perhaps, led him to think lightly of temptation. He went to a dancing-party. God humbled him, and he seems to be going on his way rejoicing, yet humble.” Next year, that same person was found spending hours in prayer, in reading the Bible, and visiting the poor. In recording it in his journal, Mr S. writes :—“ Heard of a letter being blessed. Let me be encouraged by this answer to prayer. The good has come, and every atom of it, through Jesus. The grace flowed all the way from heaven, and entered a weak and broken vessel, just before it did the work God had given it to do.”

We can join him in the glow of feeling that dictates what follows

“4th April—Three days more, and then the 7th of April. Brightest day that ever dawned to me, or that ever can dawn, till I enter into the everlasting joy !“

“6th April, Sabbath.—It was about this very hour last year that the Lord first gave me a true hope, which has never quite left me since. How blessed my prospect now: Throughout the ages of eternity my soul to be wrapt in joys, of which Jesus shall be the one great theme! a holy rejoicing, which can know no ebbings, no interruptions, but shall be ever flowing on, ever finding new cause for a louder burst of praise when my Saviour’s loveliness is yet more displayed! in that land to meet the patriarchs and prophets, to join with the Psalmist King in chaunting to the praise of God, with all the martyrs to sing aloud, and the general assembly of the redeemed !”

Amid such breathings, prayers, efforts, studies, passed quietly away the first year of his new life.

04.00. Robert Murray M'Cheyne

Robert Murray M’Cheyne by Andrew A. Bonar (1810-1892)

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Introduction.

, on 25th March 1843, Robert Murray M’Cheyne died at the age of twenty-nine, it was inevitable that men should turn to Andrew Bonar for a Memoir of the one whose brief ministry of seven-and-a-half years had "stamped an indelible impress on Scotland." Both men were born in Edinburgh, Bonar three years before M’Cheyne, and after an education at the High School and University they entered the Divinity Hall in the autumn of 1831. From that point onwards they were the closest friends. They met with a few others every Saturday morning at half-past six for Bible study, together they sought out the spiritually needy in the poor quarters of the city, and they exhorted one another to the pursuit of that personal holiness which was to be so characteristic of their future lives. Already it was their mutual conviction that "it is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus," and their common aim was to live near to Christ. At the end of their course, in 1835, their ways temporarily diverged; Bonar went southwards to aid the minister at Jedburgh and M’Cheyne westwards to assist in the parishes of Larbert and Dunipace near Stirling. In the autumn of 1836 M’Cheyne was called to his historic pastorate of St. Peter’s, Dundee, and immediately we find him inviting Bonar to make the first of many visits; "I subjoin a map that you may find the house where I live; it is about five minutes’ walk further west than the church—the west-most lane in Dundee going down to the sea." Two years later M’Cheyne was offered a charge in the not far off beautiful village of Collace in Perthshire. He declined the invitation but secured it for his friend Andrew Bonar and thus once more they were settled within easy reach of each other. In 1839 they went together, with two other Church of Scotland ministers, to Palestine for six months, to explore the possibilities of missionary work. In their absence a revival commenced in Dundee and, not long after their return, in some measure, at Collace. This brought the two pastors into even closer fellowship, and they often rode over to assist one another.[1] On one occasion as M’Cheyne arrived at the door of the Collace manse on a wintry day, he said, "I have been riding all the way to-day through the pure white snow, and that verse has been in my mind all the time, ‘Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.’" Years afterwards

Andrew Bonar's old servant used to describe M'Cheyne's last visit to Collace. "He preached in the church on 'Lest I myself should be a castaway', and the folk were standin' out to the gate, and the windows were pulled down that those outside might hear. I had to come awa' after he began, and I could see from the house the kirk lichted up, and oh, I wearied sair for them to come hame! They stayed at the kirk that nicht till eleven. The folk couldna gi'e ower listenin', and Mr M'Cheyne couldna gi'e ower speakin'. I mind the time when Mr Bonar couldna get his tea ta'en for folk comin' and speerin'[2] if conversion was true. Oh, to hear Mr M'Cheyne at prayers in the mornin' ! It was as if he could never gi'e ower, he had sae muckle to ask. Ye would hae thocht the very walls would speak again. He used to rise at six on the Sabbath mornin', and go to bed at twelve at night, for he said he likit to have the whole day alone with God."

Andrew Bonar outlived M'Cheyne by nearly fifty years. He laboured on in Collace till 1856, then amongst Glasgow's multitudes he worked with the same undiminished prayerfulness that had characterized his Perthshire ministry, until his death in 1892. But throughout the course of his long ministry the memory and example of the friend of his youth never left him. "Life has lost half its joys, were it not the hope of saving souls," he wrote on that sad March day in 1843. "There was no friend whom I loved Eke him." Nearly forty years later when Bonar was visiting the scenes of Jonathan Edwards' ministry in America, we find such comments as these in his Diary: "Saturday, 20th August 1881—How deeply interested would Robert M'Cheyne have been today had he been with us! he who used to speak of this place. It was really strange to me and wonderful that this morning I should be on the way to Northampton where so much work was done for God in other days. The day was beautiful, everything bathed in sunshine...We came to what was the old street where Jonathan Edwards' house stood..." The next day his thoughts were still dwelling on old memories when he wrote: "Filled with alarm and regret in reviewing the Lord's mercies to me, in using me to write the Memoir of R. M. M'Cheyne, for which I am continually receiving thanks from ministers. Why was I commissioned to write that book? How poor have been my returns of thankfulness. Oh, when shall I attain to the same holy sweetness and unction, and when shall I reach the deep fellowship with God which he used to manifest?"

Andrew Bonar's biography of M'Cheyne was written at Collace between the months of September and December 1843, and it conveys the fragrance of his life in a way that no later writer could ever recapture. It is as though a breath of the revivals which were then refreshing Scotland still linger over these pages, and as the reader is led back into the atmosphere of those times he is made to feel that the prayers which were once offered for the original publication are still being abundantly answered from on high. Being dead, M'Cheyne yet speaks and it may be doubted whether any Christian can seriously read these pages without having an example of the power of godliness stamped upon his conscience in a manner that will abide with him all his days. So close was M'Cheyne's life and ministry to eternal realities that even with the passing of years and generations the importance of the lessons he taught abides the same. There is no doubt that could we regather the long departed flock at St. Peter's and summon back their pastor from the New Jerusalem, the message they would receive would be exactly as it was:

"Oh ! brethren, be wise. 'Why stand ye all the day idle?' In a little moment it will be all over. A little while and the day of grace will be over—preaching, praying will be done. A little while, and we shall stand before the great white throne—a little while, and the wicked shall not be; we shall see them going away into everlasting punishment. A little while, and the work of eternity shall be

begun. We shall be like Him—we shall see Him day and night in His temple—we shall sing the new song, without sin and without weariness, for ever and ever." The Publishers,

August 2, 1960.

ENDNOTES:

[1] It is interesting to note that during the times of revival of this period Isabella Dickson, who became Andrew Bonar's wife in 1848, was converted. Recalling her first impression of M'Cheyne, she later told her husband, "There was something singularly attractive about Mr. M'Cheyne's holiness. It was not his matter nor his manner either that struck me; it was just the living epistle of Christ—a picture so lovely, I felt I would have given all the world to be as he was, but knew all the time I was dead in sins."

[2] Asking.

04.01. His Youth and Preparation for the Ministry

CHAPTER I HIS YOUTH, AND PREPARATION FOR THE MINISTRY "Many shall rejoice at his birth; for he shall be great in the sight of the Lord."

Luke 1:14-15. In the midst of the restless activity of such a day as ours, it will be felt by ministers of Christ to be useful, in no common degree, to trace the steps of one who but lately left us, and who, during the last years of his short life, walked calmly in almost unbroken fellowship with the FATHER and the SON. The date of his birth was May 21, 1813. About that time, as is now evident to us who can look back on the past, the Great Head had a purpose of blessing for the Church of Scotland. Eminent men of God appeared to plead the cause of Christ. The Cross was lifted up boldly in the midst of Church Courts which had long been ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. More spirituality and deeper seriousness began a few years onward to prevail among the youth of our Divinity Halls. In the midst of such events, whereby the Lord was secretly preparing a rich blessing for souls in all our borders, the subject of this Memoir was born. "Many were to rejoice at his birth;" for he was one of the blessings which were beginning to be dropped down upon Scotland, though none then knew that one was born whom hundreds would look up to as their spiritual father. The place of his birth was Edinburgh, where his parents resided. He was the youngest child of the family, and was called ROBERT MURRAY, after the name of some of his kindred. From his infancy his sweet and affectionate temper was remarked by all who knew him. His mind was quick in its attainments; he was easily taught the common lessons of youth, and some of his peculiar endowments began early to appear. At the age of four, while recovering from some illness, he selected as his recreation the study of the Greek alphabet, and was able to name all the letters, and write them in a rude way upon a slate. A year after, he made rapid progress in the English class, and at an early period became somewhat eminent among his school-fellows for his melodious voice and powers of recitation. There were at that time catechetical exercises held in the Tron Church, in the interval between sermons; and some friends remember the interest often excited in the hearers by his correct and sweet recitation of the Psalms and passages of Scripture. But as yet he knew not the Lord, he lived to himself, "having no hope, and without God in the world." (Ephesians 2:12). In October 1821, he entered the High School, where he continued his literary studies during the usual period of six years. He maintained a high place in his classes; and, in the Rector’s Class, distinguished himself by eminence in geography and recitation. It was during the last year of his attendance at the High School that he first ventured on poetical composition, the subject being, "Greece, but living Greece no more." The lines are characterized chiefly by enthusiasm for liberty and Grecian heroism, for in these days his soul had never soared to a higher region. His companions speak of him as one who had even then peculiarities that drew attention:—of a light, tall form—full of elasticity and vigour—ambitious, yet noble in his dispositions, disdaining everything like meanness or deceit. Some would have been apt to regard him as exhibiting many traits of a Christian character; but his susceptible mind had not, at that time, a relish for any higher joy than the refined gaieties of society, and for such pleasures as the song and the dance could yield. He himself regarded these as days of ungodliness—days wherein

he cherished a pure morality, but lived in heart a Pharisee. I have heard him say that there was a correctness and propriety in his demeanour at times of devotion, and in public worship, which some, who knew not his heart, were ready to put to the account of real feeling. And this experience of his own heart made him look with jealousy on the mere outward signs of devotion, in dealing with souls. He had learnt in his own case how much a soul, unawakened to a sense of guilt, may have satisfaction in performing, from the proud consciousness of integrity towards man, and a sentimental devotedness of mind that chastens the feelings without changing the heart.

He had great delight in rural scenery. Most of his summer vacations used to be spent in Dumfriesshire, and his friends in the parish of Ruthwell and its vicinity retain a vivid remembrance of his youthful days. His poetic temperament led him to visit whatever scenes were fitted to stir the soul. At all periods of his life, also, he had a love of enterprise. During the summer months he occasionally made excursions with his brother, or some intimate friend, to visit the lakes and hills of our Highlands, cherishing thereby, unawares, a fondness for travel, that was most useful to him in after days. In one, of these excursions, a somewhat romantic occurrence befell the travelers, such as we might rather have expected to meet with in the records of his Eastern journey. He and his friend had set out on foot to explore, at their leisure, Dunkeld and the highlands in its vicinity. They spent a day at Dunkeld, and about sunset set out again with the view of crossing the hills to Strathardle. A dense mist spread over the hills soon after they began to climb. They pressed on, but lost the track that might have guided them safely to the glen. They knew not how to direct their steps to any dwelling. Night came on, and they had no resource but to couch among the heath, with no other covering than the clothes they wore. They felt hungry and cold; and, awaking at midnight, the awful stillness of the lonely mountains spread a strange fear over them. But, drawing close together, they again lay down to rest, and slept soundly till the cry of some wild birds and the morning dawn aroused them.

Entering the Edinburgh University in November 1827, he gained some prize in all the various classes he attended. In private he studied the modern languages; and gymnastic exercises at that time gave him unbounded delight. He used his pencil with much success, and then it was that his hand was prepared for sketching the scenes of the Holy Land. He had a very considerable knowledge of music, and himself sang correctly and beautifully. This, too, was a gift which was used to the glory of the Lord in after days—wonderfully enlivening his secret devotions, and enabling him to lead the song of praise in the congregation wherever occasion required. Poetry also was a never-failing recreation; and his taste in this department drew the attention of Professor Wilson, who adjudged him the prize in the Moral Philosophy class for a poem, "On the Covenanters." In the winter of 1831, he commenced his studies in the Divinity Hall, under Dr Chalmers; and the study of Church History under Dr Welsh. It may be naturally asked, What led him to wish to preach salvation to his fellow-sinners? Could he say, like Robert Bruce, "I was first called to my grace, before I obeyed my calling to the ministry"? Few questions are more interesting than this; and our answer to it will open up some of the wonderful ways of Him "whose path is in the great waters, and whose footsteps are not known;" Psalms 77:19 : for the same event that awakened his soul to a true sense of sin and misery, led him to the ministry.

During his attendance at the literary and philosophical classes he felt occasional impressions, none of them perhaps of much depth. There can be no doubt that he himself looked upon the death of his eldest brother, David, as the event which awoke him from the sleep of nature, and

brought in the first beam of Divine light into his soul. By that providence the Lord was calling one soul to enjoy the treasures of grace, while he took the other into the possession of glory. In this brother, who was his senior by eight or nine years, the light of Divine grace shone before men with rare and solemn loveliness. His classical attainments were very high; and, after the usual preliminary studies, he had been admitted Writer to the Signet. One distinguishing quality of his character was his sensitive truthfulness. In a moment would the shadow flit across his brow, if any incident were related wherein there was the slightest exaggeration; or even when nothing but truth was spoken, if only the deliverer seemed to take up a false or exaggerated view. He must not merely speak the whole truth himself, but he must have the hearer also to apprehend the whole truth. He spent much of his leisure hours in attending to the younger members of the family. Tender and affectionate, his grieved look when they vexed him by resisting his counsels had (it is said) something in it so persuasive that it never failed in the end to prevail on those with whom his words had not succeeded. His youngest brother, at a time when he lived according to the course of this world, was the subject of many of his fervent prayers. But a deep melancholy, in a great degree the effect of bodily ailments, settled down on David's soul. Many weary months did he spend in awful gloom, till the trouble of his soul wasted away his body; but the light broke in before his death; joy, from the face of a fully reconciled Father above, lighted up his face; and the peace of his last days was the sweet consolation left to his afflicted friends, when, 8th July 183 I, he fell asleep in Jesus. The death of this brother, with all its circumstances, was used by the Holy Spirit to produce a deep impression on Robert's soul. In many respects—even in the gifts of a poetic mind—there had been a congeniality between him and David. The vivacity of Robert's ever active and lively mind was the chief point of difference. This vivacity admirably fitted him for public life; it needed only to be chastened and solemnized, and the event that had now occurred wrought this effect. A few months before, the happy family circle had been broken up by the departure of the second brother for India, in the Bengal Medical Service; but when, in the course of the summer, David was removed from them for ever, there were impressions left such as could never be effaced, at least from the mind of Robert. Naturally of an intensely affectionate disposition, this stroke moved his whole soul. His quiet hours seem to have been often spent in thoughts of him who was now gone to glory. There are some lines remaining in which his poetic mind has most touchingly, and with uncommon vigour, painted him whom he had lost—lines all the more interesting, because the delineation of character and form which they contain, cannot fail to call up to those who knew him the image of the author himself. Sometime after his brother's death, he had tried to preserve the features of his well-remembered form, by attempting a portrait from memory; but throwing aside the pencil in despair, he took up the pen and poured out the fullness of his heart. ON PAINTING THE MINIATURE LIKENESS OF ONE DEPARTED Alas! not perfect yet—another touch, And still another, and another still, Till those dull lips breathe life, and yonder eye Lose its lack-lustre hue, and be lit up With the warm glance of living feeling. No—

It never can be! Ah, poor, powerless art!

Most vaunting, yet most impotent, thou seek'st To trace the thousand thousand shades and lights That glowed conspicuous on the blessed face Of him thou fain wouldst imitate—to bind Down to the fragile canvas the wild play Of thought and mild affection, which were wont To dwell in the serious eye, and play around The placid mouth. Thou seek'st to give again That which the burning soul, inhabiting Its clay-built tenement, alone can give— To leave on cold dead matter the impress

Of living mind—to bid a line, a shade, Speak forth not words, but the soft intercourse Which the immortal spirit, while on earth It tabernacles, breathes from every pore—

Thoughts not converted into words, and hopes, And fears, and hidden joys, and griefs, unborn Into the world of sound, but beaming forth In that expression which no words, or work Of cunning artist, can express. In vain,

Alas ! In vain!

Come hither, painter; come Take up once more thine instruments—thy brush And palette—if thy haughty art be, as thou say'st, Omnipotent, and if thy hand can dare To wield creative power. Renew thy toil, And let my memory, vivified by love, Which Death's cold separation has but warmed, And rendered sacred, dictate to thy skill, And guide thy pencil. From the jetty hair Take off that gaudy lustre that but mocks The true original; and let the dry, Soft, gently-turning locks, appear instead.

What though to fashion's garish eye they seem Untutored and ungainly—still to me, Than folly's foppish head-gear, lovelier far Are they, because bespeaking mental toil, Labour assiduous, through the golden days (Golden if so improved) of guileless youth, Unwearied mining in the precious stores Of classic lore—and better, nobler still, In God's own holy writ. And scatter here And there a thread of grey, to mark the grief That prematurely checked the bounding flow Of the warm current in his veins, and shed An early twilight o'er so bright a dawn. No wrinkle sits upon that brow!—and thus It ever was. The angry strife and cares Of avaricious miser did not leave Their base memorial on so fair a page. The eye-brows next draw closer down, and throw A softening shade o'er the mild orbs below.

Let the full eye-lid, drooping, half conceal The back-retiring eye; and point to earth The long brown lashes that bespeak a soul Like his who said, "I am not worthy, Lord !" From underneath these lowly turning lids, Let not shine forth the gaily sparkling light Which dazzles oft and oft deceives—nor yet The dull unmeaning lustre that can gaze Alike on all the world. But paint an eye In whose half-hidden, steady light I read A truth-inquiring mind; a fancy, too, That could array in sweet poetic garb The truth he found; while on his artless harp He touched the gentlest feelings, which the blaze Of winter's hearth warms in the homely heart. And oh 1 recall the look of faith sincere, With which that eye would scrutinize the page That tells us of offended God appeased By awful sacrifice upon the cross Of Calvary—that bids us leave a world Immersed in darkness and in death, and seek A better country. Ah ! how oft that eye Would turn on me, with pity's tenderest look, And, only half-upbraiding, bid me flee From the vain idols of my boyish heart!

It was about the same time, while still feeling the sadness of this bereavement, that he wrote the fragment entitled:—

"THE RIGHTEOUS PERISHETH AND NO MAN LAYETH IT TO HEART"

A grave I know Where earthly show Is not—a mound Whose gentle round Sustains the load Of a fresh sod. Its shape is rude, And weeds intrude Their yellow flowers— In gayer bowers Unknown. The grass, A tufted mass, Is rank and strong—

Unsmoothed and long. No rosebud there Embalms the air; No lily chaste Adorns the waste, Nor daisy's head Bedecks the bed. No myrtles wave Above that grave; Nor heather-bell Is there to tell

Of gentle friend Who sought to lend A sweeter sleep To him who deep Beneath the ground Repose has found. No stone of woe Is there to show The name, or tell How passing well He loved his God, And how he trod The humble road That leads through sorrow To a bright morrow.

Unknown in life, And far from strife, He lived;—and though The magic flow Of genius played Around his head, And he could weave "The song at eve," And touch the heart, With gentlest art; Or cares beguile, And draw the smile Of peace from those Who wept their woes;—

Yet when the love Of Christ above To guilty men Was shown him—then He left the joys Of worldly noise, And humbly laid His drooping head

Upon the cross; And thought the loss Of all that earth Contained—of mirth, Of loves, and fame, And pleasures' name— No sacrifice To win the prize, Which Christ secured, When he endured, For us the load— The wrath of God! With many a tear, And many a fear, With many a sigh And heart-wrung cry Of timid faith, He sought the breath: But which can give The power to live— Whose word alone Can melt the stone, Bid tumult cease, And all be peace!

He sought not now To wreath his brow With laurel bough.

He sought no more To gather store Of earthly lore, Nor vainly strove To share the love Of heaven above, With aught below That earth can show. The smile forsook His cheek—his look Was cold and sad; And even the glad

Return of morn, When the ripe corn Waves o'er the plains, And simple swains With joy prepare The toil to share Of harvest brought No lively thought To him.

* * * * And spring adorns The sunny morns With opening flowers; And beauty showers O'er lawn and mead; Its virgin head The snow-drop steeps In dew, and peeps The crocus forth, Nor dreads the north— But even the spring No smile can bring To him, whose eye Sought in the sky For brighter scenes, Where intervenes No darkening cloud Of sin to shroud The gazer's view,

Thus sadly flew The merry spring; And gaily sing The birds their loves In summer groves. But not for him Their notes they trim. His ear is cold— His tale is told,

Above his grave The grass may wave—

* * * * The crowd pass by Without a sigh

Above the spot.

They knew him not—

They could not know; And even though, Why should they shed

Above the dead Who slumbers here A single tear?

I cannot weep, Though in my sleep I sometimes clasp, With love's fond grasp His gentle hand, And see him stand

Beside my bed, And lean his head

Upon my breast, And bid me rest Nor night nor day

Till I can say That I have found The holy ground In which there lies The Pearl of Price—

Till all the ties The soul that bind, And all the lies The soul that blind Be * * * *

Nothing could more fully prove the deep impression which the event made than these verses. But it was not a transient regret, nor was it the "sorrow of the world." He was in his eighteenth year when his brother died: and if this was not the year of his new birth, at least it was the year when the first streaks of dawn appeared in his soul. From that day forward his friends observed a change. His poetry was pervaded with serious thought, and all his pursuits began to be followed out in another spirit. He engaged in the labours of a Sabbath-school, and began to seek God to his soul, in the diligent reading of the Word, and attendance on a faithful ministry.

How important this period of his life appeared in his own view, may be gathered from his allusions to it in later days. A year after, he writes in his diary: "On this morning last year came the first overwhelming blow to my worldliness; how blessed to me, thou, O God, only knowest, who hast made it so." Every year he marked this day as one to be remembered, and occasionally its recollections seem to have come in like a flood. In a letter to a friend (8th July 1842), upon a matter entirely local, he concludes by a postscript—"This day eleven years ago, my holy brother David entered into his rest, aged 26." And on that same day, writing a note to one of his flock in Dundee (who had asked him to furnish a preface to a work printed 1740, "Letters on Spiritual Subjects"), he commends the book, and adds—"Pray for me, that I may be made holier and wiser—less like myself, and more like my heavenly Master; that Z may not regard my life, if so be I may finish my course with joy. This day eleven years ago, I lost my loved and loving brother, and began to seek a Brother who cannot die."

It was to companions who could sympathize in his feelings, that he unbosomed himself. At that period it was not common for inquiring souls to carry their case to their pastor. A conventional reserve upon these subjects prevailed even among lively believers. It almost seemed as if they were ashamed of the Son of Man. This reserve appeared to him very sinful; and he felt it to be so great an evil, that, in after days, he was careful to encourage anxious souls to converse with him freely. The nature of his experience, however, we have some means of knowing. On one occasion, a few of us who had studied together were reviewing the Lord’s dealings with our souls, and how he had brought us to himself, all very nearly at the same time, though without any special instrumentality. He stated that there was nothing sudden in his case, and that he was led to Christ through deep and ever-abiding, but not awful or distracting convictions. In this we see the Lord’s sovereignty. In bringing a soul to the Saviour, the Holy Spirit invariably leads it to very deep consciousness of sin; but then he causes this consciousness of sin to be more distressing and intolerable to some than to others. But in one point does the experience of all believing sinners agree in this matter—viz. their soul presented to their view nothing but an abyss of sin, when the grace of God that bringeth salvation appeared. The Holy Spirit carried on his work in the subject of this Memoir, by continuing to deepen in him the conviction of his ungodliness, and the pollution of his whole nature. And 0 his life long, he viewed his original sin, not as an excuse for his actual sins, but as an aggravation of them all. In this view he was of the mind of David, taught by the unerring Spirit of Truth. See Psalms 51:4-5. At first the light dawned slowly; so slowly, that, for a considerable time, he still relished an occasional plunge into scenes of gaiety. Even after entering the Divinity Hall, he could be persuaded to indulge in lighter pursuits, at least during the two first

years of his attendance; but it was with growing alarm. When hurried away by such worldly joys, I find him writing thus:—"Sept. 14.—May there be few such records as this in my biography." Then, "Dec. 9.—A thorn in my side—much torment." As the unholiness of his pleasures became more apparent, he writes:—"March 10th, 1832—I hope never to play cards again." "March 25th—Never visit on a Sunday evening again." "April 10th—Absented myself from the dance; upbraidings ill to bear. But I must try to bear the cross." It seems to be in reference to the receding tide, which thus for a season repeatedly drew him back to the world, that on July 8th 1836, he records—"This morning five years ago, my dear brother David died, and my heart for the first time knew true bereavement. Truly it was all well. Let me be dumb, for thou didst it; and it was good for me that I was afflicted. I know not that any providence was ever more abused by man than that was by me: and yet, Lord, what mountains thou comest over! none was ever more blessed to me." To us who can look at the results, it appears probable that the Lord permitted him thus to try many broken cisterns, and to taste the wormwood of many earthly streams, in order that in after days, by the side of the fountain of living waters, he might point to the world he had for ever left, and testify the surpassing preciousness of what he had now found.

Mr. Alexander Somerville (afterwards minister of Anderston Church, Glasgow) was his familiar friend and companion in the gay scenes of his youth. And he, too, about this time, having been brought to taste the powers of the world to come, they united their efforts for each other's welfare. They met together for the study of the Bible, and used to exercise themselves in the Septuagint Greek and the Hebrew original. But oftener still they met for prayer and solemn converse; and carrying on all their studies in the same spirit, watched each other's steps in the narrow way.

He thought himself much profited, at this period, by investigating the subject of Election and the Free Grace of God. But it was the reading of "The Sum of Saving Knowledge," generally appended to our Confession of Faith, that brought him to a clear understanding of the way of acceptance with God. Those who are acquainted with its admirable statements of truth, will see how well fitted it was to direct an inquiring soul. I find him some years afterwards recording:—"March 11th, 1834—Read in the 'Sum o f Saving Knowledge,' the work which I think first of all wrought a saving change in me. How gladly would I renew the reading of it, if that change might be carried on to perfection!" It will be observed that he never reckoned his soul saved, notwithstanding all his convictions and views of sin, until he really went into the Holiest of all on the warrant of the Redeemer's work; for assuredly a sinner is still under wrath, until he has actually availed himself of the way to the Father opened up by Jesus. All his knowledge of his sinfulness, and all his sad feeling of his own need and danger, cannot place him one step farther off from the lake of fire. It is "he that comes to Christ" that is saved.

Before this period, he had received a. bias towards the ministry from his brother David, who used to speak of the ministry as the most blessed work on earth, and often expressed the greatest delight in the hope that his younger brother might one day become a minister of Christ. And now, with altered views—with an eye that could gaze on heaven and hell, and a heart that felt the love of a reconciled God—he sought to become a herald of salvation.

He had begun to keep a register of his studies, and the manner in which his time slipped away, some months before his brother's death. For a considerable time this register contains almost nothing but the bare incidents of the diary, and on Sabbaths the texts of the sermons he had

heard. There is one gleam of serious thought—but it is the only one—during that period. On occasion of Dr Andrew Thomson's funeral, he records the deep and universal grief that pervaded the town and then subjoins—"Pleasing to see so much public feeling excited on the decease of so worthy a man. How much are the times changed within these eighteen centuries, since the time when Joseph besought the body in secret, and when he and Nicodemus were the only ones found to bear the body to the tomb."

It is in the end of the year that evidences of a change appear. From that period and ever onward his dry register of every-day incidents is varied with such passages as the following:—

"November 12.—Reading H. Martyn's Memoirs. Would I could imitate him, giving up father, mother, country, house, health, life, all—for Christ. And yet, what hinders? Lord purify me, and give me strength to dedicate myself, my all, to thee!"

"December 4.—Reading Legh Richmond's Life. 'Poenitentia profunda, non sine lacrymis. Nunquam me ipsum, tam vilem, tam inutilem, tam pauperim, et praecipue tam ingratum, adhuc vidi. Sint lacrymae dedicationis mew pignora!'" ["Deep penitence, not unmixed with tears. I never before saw myself so vile, so useless, so poor, and, above all, so ungrateful. May these tears be the pledges of my self-dedication."] There is frequently at this period a sentence in Latin occurring like the above in the midst of other matter, apparently with the view of giving freer expression to his feelings regarding himself.

"Dec. 9.—Heard a street-preacher: foreign voice. Seems really in earnest. He quoted the striking passage, 'The spirit and the bride say, Came, and let him that heareth say, Come.' From this he seems to derive his authority. Let me learn from this man to be in earnest for the truth, and to despise the scoffing of the world."

Dec. 18.—After spending an evening too lightly, he writes—"My heart must break off from a11 these things. What right have I to steal and abuse my Master's time? 'Redeem it,' he is crying to me."

"Dec. 25.—My mind not yet calmly fixed on the Rock of Ages."

"January 12. 1832.-Cor non pacem habet. Quare? Peccatum apud fores manet." ["My heart has not peace. Why? Sin lieth at my door."]

"Jan, 25.—A lovely day. Eighty-four cases of cholera at Musselburgh. How it creeps nearer and nearer, like a snake. Who will be the first victim here? Let thine everlasting arms be around us, and we shall be safe."

"Jan. 29. Sabbath.—Afternoon heard Mr. Bruce (then minister of the New North Church, Edinburgh), on Malachi 1:1-6. It constitutes the very gravamen of the charge against the unrenewed man, that he has affection for his earthly parent, and reverence for his earthly master; but none for God! Most noble discourse."

"February 2.—Not a trait worth remembering! And yet these four-and-twenty hours must be accounted for."

Feb. 5. Sabbath.—In the afternoon, having heard the late Mr. Martin, of St George's,[1] he writes, on returning home—"O quam humilem, sed quam diligentissimum; quam dejectum, sed quam vigilem, quam die noctuque precantem, decet me esse quum tales viras aspicio. Juva, Pater, Fili, et Spiritus!" ["O how humble yet how diligent, how lowly yet how watchful, how prayerful night and day it becomes me to be, when I see such men. Help, Father, Son, and Spirit!"] From this date he seems to have sat, along with his friend Mr. Somerville, almost entirely under Mr. Bruce's ministry. He took copious notes of his lectures and sermons, which 90 remain among his papers.

"Feb. 28.—Sober conversation. Fain would I turn to the most interesting of all subjects. Cowardly backwardness: 'For whosoever is ashamed of me and my words,' &c." At this time, hearing, concerning a friend of the family, that she had said, "that she was determined to keep by the world," he penned the following lines on her melancholy decision:—

She has chosen the world, And its paltry crowd,—

She has chosen the world, And an endless shroud!

She has chosen the world, With its misnamed pleasures:

She has chosen the world, Before heaven's own treasures.

She hath launched her boat On life's giddy sea, And her all is afloat For eternity. But Bethlehem's star Is not in her view; And her aim is far From the harbour true When the storm descends From an angry sky, Ah! where from the winds Shall the vessel fly? When stars are concealed, And rudder gone, And heaven is sealed To the wandering one! The whirlpool opes For the gallant prize;

And, with all her hopes, To the deep she hies! But who may tell Of the place of woe, Where the wicked dwell— Where the worldlings go? For the human heart Can ne'er conceive What joys are the part Of them who believe; Nor can justly think Of the cup of death Which all must drink Who despise the faith.

Away, then—oh, fly From the joys of earth! Her smile is a lie—

There's a sting in her mirth.

Come, leave the dreams Of this transient night, And bask in the beams Of an endless light.

"March 6.—Wild wind and rain all day long. Hebrew class—Psalms. New beauty in the original every time I read. Dr. Welsh—lecture on Pliny's letter about the Christians of Bithynia. Professor Jameson on quartz. Dr. Chalmers grappling with Hume's arguments. Evening.—Notes and little else. Mind and body dull." This is a specimen of his register of daily study.

March 20.—After a few sentences in Latin, concluding with, "In meam animam veni, Domine Deus omnipotens," he writes, "Leaning on a staff of my own devising, it betrayed me, and broke under me. It was not thy staff. Resolving to be a god, thou shewedst me that I was but a man. But my own staff being broken, why may I not lay hold of thine?—Read part of the life of Jonathan Edwards. How feeble does my spark of Christianity appear beside such a sun! But even his was a borrowed light, and the same source is still open to enlighten me."

"April 8.—Have found much rest in him who bore all our burdens for us."

"April 26.—To-night I ventured to break the ice of unchristian silence. Why should not selfishness be buried beneath the Atlantic in matters so sacred?" May 6.—Saturday evening.—This was the evening previous to the Communion, and in prospect of again declaring himself the Lord's, at his Table, he enters into a brief review of his state. He had partaken of the ordinance in May of the year before for the first time; but he was then living at ease, and saw not the solemn nature of the step he took. He now sits down and reviews the past:—

"What a mass of corruption have I been! How great a portion of my life have I spent wholly without God in the world; given up to sense and the perishing things around me. Naturally of a feeling and sentimental disposition, how much of my religion has been, and to this day is, tinged with these colours of earth! Restrained from open vice by educational views and the fear of man, how much ungodliness has reigned within me! How often has it broken through all restraints, and come out in the shape of lusts and anger, mad ambitions, and unhallowed words! Though my vice was always refined, yet how subtile and how awfully prevalent it was! How complete a test was the Sabbath—spent in weariness, as much of it as was given to God's service! How I polluted it by my hypocrisies, my self-conceits, my worldly thoughts, and worldly friends! How formally and unheedingly the Bible was read-how little was read—so little that even now I have not read it all! How unboundedly was the wild impulse of the heart obeyed! How much more was the creature loved than the Creator!—O great God, that didst suffer me to live whilst I so dishonoured thee, thou knowest the whole; and it was thy hand alone that could awaken me from the death in which I was, and was contented to be. Gladly would I have escaped from the Shepherd that sought me as I strayed; but he took me up in his arms and carried me back; and yet he took me not for any thing that was in me. I was no more fit for his service than the Australian, and no more worthy to be called and chosen. Yet, why should I doubt? not that God is unwilling, not that he is unable—of both I am assured. But, perhaps, my old sins are too fearful, and my unbelief too glaring? Nay; I come to Christ, not although I am a sinner, but just because I am a sinner, even the chief." He then adds, "And though sentiment and constitutional enthusiasm may have a great effect on me, still I believe that my soul is in sincerity desirous and earnest about having all its concerns at rest with God and Christ—that his kingdom occupies the most part of all my thoughts, and even of my long-polluted affections. Not unto me, not unto me, be the shadow of praise or of merit ascribed, but let all glory be given to thy most holy name! As surely as thou didst make the mouth with which I pray, so surely dost thou prompt every prayer of faith which I utter. Thou hast made me all that I am, and given me all that I have."

Next day, after communicating, he writes: "I well remember when I was an enemy, and especially abhorred this ordinance as binding me down; but if I be bound to Christ in heart, I shall not dread any bands that can draw me close to him." Evening.—"Much peace. Look back, my soul, and view the mind that belonged to thee but twelve months ago—my soul, thy place is in the dust!"

"May 19.—Thought with more comfort than usual of being a witness for Jesus in a foreign land."

"June 4.—Walking with A. Somerville by Craigleith. Conversing on missions. If I am to go to the heathen to speak of the unsearchable riches of Christ, this one thing must be given me, to be out of the reach of the baneful influence of esteem or contempt. If worldly motives go with me, I shall never convert a soul, and shall lose my own in the labour."

"June 22.—Variety of studies. Septuagint translation of Exodus, and Vulgate. Bought Edwards' works. Drawing—Truly there was nothing in me that should have induced him to choose me. I was but as the other brands upon whom the fire is already kindled, which shall burn for evermore! And as soon could the billet leap from the hearth and become a green tree, as my soul could have sprung to newness of life."

June 25.—In reference to the office of the holy ministry: "How apt are we to lose our hours in the vainest babblings, as do the world! How can this be with those chosen for the mighty office? fellow-workers with God? heralds of his Son? evangelists? men set apart to the work, chosen out of the chosen, as it were the very pick of the flocks, who are to shine as the stars for ever and ever? Alas, alas! my soul, where shalt thou appear? O Lord God, I am a little child! But thou wilt send an angel with a live coal from off the altar, and touch my unclean lips, and put a tongue within my dry mouth, so that I shall say with Isaiah, 'Here am I, send me.'" Then, after reading a little of Edwards' works, "O that heart and understanding may grow together, like brother and sister, leaning on one another."

"June 27.—Life of David Brainerd. Most wonderful man! What conflicts, what depressions, desertions, strength, advancement, victories, within thy torn bosom! I cannot express what I think when I think of thee. To-night, more set upon missionary enterprise than ever."

"June 28.—O for Brainerd's humility and sin-loathing dispositions! "

"June 30.—Much carelessness, sin, and sorrow. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death? Enter thou, my soul, into the rock, and hide thee in the dust for fear of the Lord and the glory of his majesty." And then he writes a few verses, of which the following are some stanzas:—

I will arise and seek my God, And, bowed down beneath my load, Lay all my sins before him;

Then he will wash my soul from sin, And put a new heart me within, And teach me to adore him.

O ye that fain would find the joy— The only one that wants alloy— Which never is deceiving;

Come to the Well of Life with me, And drink, as it is proffered, free, The gospel draught receiving.

I come to Christ, because I know The very worst are called to go; And when in faith I find him, I'll walk in him, and lean on him, Because I cannot move a limb Until he say, "Unbind him."

"July 3.—This last bitter root of worldliness that has so often betrayed me has this night so grossly, that I cannot but regard it as God's chosen way to make me loathe and forsake it for ever. I would vow; but it is much more like a weakly worm to pray. Sit in the dust, O my soul!" I believe he was enabled to keep his resolution. Once only, in the end of this year, was he again led back to gaiety; but it was the last time.

"July 7.—Saturday.—After finishing my usual studies, tried to fast a little, with much prayer and earnest seeking of God's face, remembering what occurred this night last year." (Alluding to his brother's death.)

"July 22.—Had this evening a more complete understanding of that self-emptying and abasement with which it is necessary to come to Christ—a denying of self, trampling it under foot—a

recognizing of the complete righteousness and justice of God, that could do nothing else with us but condemn us utterly, and thrust us down to lowest hell,—a feeling that, even in hell, we should rejoice in his sovereignty, and say that all was rightly done."

"August 15.—Little done, and as little suffered. Awfully important question—Am I redeeming the time?"

"Aug. 18.—Heard of the death of James Somerville[2] by fever, induced by cholera. O God, thy ways and thoughts are not as ours! He had preached his first sermon. I saw him last on Friday, 27th July, at the College gate; shook hands ; and little thought I was to see him no more on earth.

"September 2—Sabbath evening.—Reading. Too much engrossed, and too little devotional. Preparation for a fall. Warning. We may be too engrossed with the shell even of heavenly things."

"Sept. 9.—Oh for true, unfeigned humility! I know I have cause to be humble; and yet I do not know one half of that cause. I know I am proud; and yet I do not know the half of that pride."

"Sept. 30—Somewhat straitened by loose Sabbath observance. Best way is to be explicit and manly."

"November 1.—More abundant longings for the work of the ministry. O that Christ would but count me faithful, that a dispensation of the Gospel might be committed to me!" And then he adds, "Much peace. Peaceful, because believing."

December 2.—Hitherto he used to spend much of the Sabbath evening in extending his notes of Mr. Bruce's sermons; but now, "Determined to be brief with these for the sake of a more practical, meditative, resting, sabbatical evening."

"Dec. 11—Mind quite unfitted for devotion. Prayerless prayer."

"Dec. 31.—God has in this past year introduced me to the preparation of the ministry—I bless him for that. He has helped me to give up much of my shame to name his name, and be on his side, especially before particular friends-I bless him for that. He has taken conclusively away friends that might have been a snare-must have been a stumbling-block—I bless him for that. He has introduced me to one Christian friend, and sealed more and more my amity with another-I bless him for that."

January 27. 1833.—On this day it had been the custom of his brother David to write a "Carmen Natale" on their father's birth-day. Robert took up the domestic song this year; and, in doing so, makes some beautiful and tender allusions.

"Ah! where is the harp that was strung to thy praise, So oft and so sweetly in happier days? When the tears that we shed were the tears of our joy, And the pleasures of home were unmixed with alloy? The harp is now mute—its last breathings are spoken— And the cord, though 'twas threefold, is now, alas, broken!

Yet why should we murmur, short-sighted and vain, Since death to that loved one was undying gain.

Ah, fools! shall we grieve that he left this poor scene, To dwell in the realms that are ever serene?

Though he sparkled the gem in our circle of love, He is even more prized in the circles above. And though sweetly he sung of his father on earth, When this day would inspire him with tenderest mirth, Yet a holier tone to his harp is now given, As he sings to his unborn Father in heaven."

February 3.—Writing to a medical friend of his brother William's, he says—"I remember long ago a remark you once made to William, which has somehow or other stuck in my head, viz., that medical men ought to make a distinct study of the Bible, purely for the sake of administering conviction and consolation to their patients. I think you also said that you had actually begun with that view. Such a determination, though formed in youth, is one which I trust riper years will not make you blush to own."

"Feb. 11.—Somewhat overcome. Let me see: there is a creeping defect here. Humble, purpose-like reading of the Word omitted. What plant can be unwatered, and not wither?"

"Feb. 16 —Walk to Corstorphine Hill. Exquisite clear view—blue water, and brown fields, and green firs. Many thoughts on the follies of my youth. How many, O Lord, may they be? Summed up in one—ungodliness!"

"Feb. 21. —Am I as willing as ever to preach to the lost heathen?"

"March 8. —Biblical criticism. This must not supersede heart-work. How apt it is! "

"March 12. —O for activity, activity, activity!"

"March 29.—Today my second session (at the Divinity Hall) ends. I am now in the middle of my career. God hold me on with a steady pace!"

"March 31.-The bull tosses in the net! How should the Christian imitate the anxieties of the worldling?"

April 17.—He heard of the death of one whom many friends had esteemed much and lamented deeply. This led him to touch the strings of his harp again, in a measure somewhat irregular, yet sad and sweet.

"WE ALL DO FADE AS A LEAF"

SHE LIVED— So dying-like and frail, That every bitter gale Of winter seemed to blow Only to lay her low!

She lived to show how He, Who stills the stormy sea, Can overrule the winter's power, And keep alive the tiniest flower— Can bear the young lamb in his arms, And shelter it from death's alarms.

SHE DIED — When spring, with brightest flowers, Was fresh'nlng all the bowers. The linnet sung her choicest lay, When her sweet voice was hushed for aye! The snowdrop rose above the ground When she beneath her pillow found, Both cold, and white and fair—

She, fairest of the fair, She died to teach us all The loveliest must fall. A curse is written on the brow Of beauty:—and the lover's vow Cannot retain the flitting breath, Nor save from all-devouring death.

SHE LIVES— The spirit left the earth; And He who gave her birth Has called her to his dread abode, To meet her Saviour and her God.

She lives, to tell how blest Is the everlasting rest Of those who, in the Lamb’s blood laved, Are chosen, sanctified, and saved!

How fearful is their doom Who drop into the tomb Without a covert from the ire Of him who is consuming fire.

SHE SHALL LIVE— The grave shall yield his prize, When, from the rending skies, Christ shall with shouting angels come To wake the slumberers of the tomb, And many more shall rise Before our longing eyes.

Oh ! may we all together meet, Embracing the Redeemer’s feet!

"May 20.—General Assembly. The motion regarding Chapels of Ease lost, by 106 to 103- Every shock of the ram is heavier and stronger, till all shall give way."

"June 4.—Evening almost lost. Music will not sanctify, though it make feminine the heart."

"June 22.—Omissions make way for commissions. Could I but take effective warning! A world’s wealth would not make up for that saying, ‘If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father.’ But how shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?"

"June 30.—Self-examination. Why is a missionary life so often an object of my thoughts. Is it simply for the love I bear to souls? Then, why do I not show it more where I am? Souls are as precious here as in Burmah. Does the romance of the business not weigh anything with me?—the interest and esteem I would carry with me?—the nice journals and letters I should write and receive? Why would I so much rather go to the East than to the West Indies? Am I wholly deceiving my own heart? and have I not a spark of true missionary zeal? Lord, give me to understand and imitate the spirit of those unearthly words of thy dear Son, ‘It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord.’ ‘He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.’ Gloria in excelsis Deo!"

"August 13.—Clear conviction of sin is the only true origin of dependence on another’s righteousness, and, therefore, (strange to say!) of the Christian’s peace of mind and cheerfulness."

"September 8.—Reading Adam’s Private Thoughts. O for his heart-searching humility! Ah me! on what mountains of pride must I be wandering, when all I do is tinctured with the very sins this man so deplores; yet where are my wailings, where my tears, over my love of praise?"

"November 14.—Composition—a pleasant kind of labour. I fear the love of applause, or effect, goes a great way. May God keep me from preaching myself, instead of Christ crucified."

"January 15. 1834.—Heard of the death of J. S., off the Cape of Good Hope. O God! how thou breakest into families! Must not the disease be dangerous, when a tenderhearted surgeon cuts deep into the flesh? How much more when God is the operator, ‘who afflicteth not from his heart, [Nkklm], nor grieveth the children of men.’ (Lamentations 3:33)."

"February 23—Sabbath.—Rose early to seek God, and found him whom my soul loveth. Who would not rise early to meet such company? The rains are over and gone. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

Feb. 24.—He writes a letter to one who, he feared, was only sentimental, and not really under a sense of sin. "Is it possible, think you, for a person to be conceited of his miseries? May there not be a deep leaven of pride in telling how desolate and how unfeeling we are?—in brooding over our unearthly pains?—in our being excluded from the unsympathetic world?—in our being the invalids of Christ's hospital?" He had himself been taught by the Spirit that it is more humbling for us to take what grace offers, than to bewail our wants and worthlessness.

Two days after, he records, with thankful astonishment, that for the first time in his life he had been blest to awaken a soul. All who find Christ for themselves are impelled, by the holy necessity of constraining love, to seek the salvation of others. Andrew findeth his brother Peter, and Philip findeth his friend Nathaniel. So was it in the case before us. He no sooner knew Christ's righteousness as his own covering, than he longed to see others clothed in the same spotless robe. And it is peculiarly interesting to read the feelings of one who was yet to be blest in plucking so many brands from the fire, when for the first time he saw the Lord graciously employing him in this more than angelic work. We have his own testimony:—"Feb. 26. After sermon. The precious tidings that a soul has been melted down by the grace of the Saviour. How blessed an answer to prayer, if it be really so ! 'Can these dry bones live? Lord, thou knowest.' What a blessed thing it is to see the first grievings of the awakened spirit, when it cries, 'I cannot see myself a sinner; I cannot pray, for my vile heart wanders.' It has refreshed me more than a thousand sermons. I know not how to thank and admire God sufficiently for this incipient work. Lord, perfect that which thou hast begun!" A few days after—"Lord, I thank thee that thou hast shown me this marvelous working, though I was but an adoring spectator, rather than an instrument."

It is scarcely less interesting, in the case of one so gifted for the work of visiting the careless, and so singularly skilled in ministering the Word by the bedside of the dying, to find a record of the occasion when the Lord led him forth to take his first survey of this field of labour. There existed at that time, among some of the students attending the Divinity Hall, a society, the sole object of which was to stir up each other to set apart an hour or two every week for visiting the careless and needy in the most neglected portions of the town. Our rule was, not to subtract anything from our times of study, but to devote to this work an occasional hour in the intervals between different classes, or an hour that might otherwise have been given to recreation. All of us felt the work to be trying to the flesh at the outset; but none ever repented of persevering in it. One Saturday forenoon, at the close of the usual prayer-meeting, which met in Dr Chalmers' vestry, we went up together to a district in the Castle Hill. It was Robert's first near view of the heathenism of his native city, and the effect was enduring.

"March 3.—Accompanied A. B. in one of his rounds through some of the most miserable habitations I ever beheld. Such scenes I never before dreamed of. Ah, why am I such a stranger to the poor in my native town? I have passed their doors thousands of times; I have admired the huge black piles of buildings, with their lofty chimneys breaking the sun's rays—why have I never ventured within? How dwelleth the love of God in me? How cordial is the welcome even of the poorest and most loathsome to the voice of Christian sympathy! What imbedded masses of

human beings are huddled together, unvisited by friend or minister! ‘No man careth for our souls,’ is written over every forehead. Awake, my soul! Why should I give hours and days any longer to the vain world, when there is such a world of misery at my very door? Lord, put thine own strength in me; confirm every good resolution; forgive my past long life of uselessness and folly."

He forthwith became one of the Society’s most steady members, cultivating a district in the Canongate, teaching a Sabbath-school, and distributing the Monthly Visitor, along with Mr. Somerville. His experience there was fitted to give him insight into the sinner’s depravity in all its forms. His first visit in his district is thus noticed—"March 24. Visited two families with tolerable success. God grant a blessing may go with us! Began in fear and weakness and in much trembling. May the power be of God." Soon after, he narrates the following scene:—"Entered the house of——. Heard her swearing as I came up the stair. Found her storming at three little grandchildren, whom her daughter had left with her. She is a seared, hard-hearted wretch. Read Ezekiel 33:1-33. Interrupted by the entrance of her second daughter, furiously demanding her marriage lines. Became more discreet. Promised to come back—never came. Her father-inlaw entered, a hideous spectacle of an aged drunkard, demanding money. Left the house with warnings." Another case he particularly mentions of a sick woman, who, though careless before, suddenly seemed to float into a sea of joy, without being able to give any scriptural account of the change. She continued, I believe, to her death in this state; but he feared it was a subtle delusion of Satan as an angel of light. One soul, however, was, to all appearance, brought truly to the Rock of Ages, during his and his friend’s prayerful visitations. These were first-fruits.

He continues his diary, though often considerable intervals occur in the register of his spiritual state.

"May 9.—How kindly has God thwarted me in every in stance where I sought to enslave myself. I will learn at least to glory in disappointments."

"May 10.—At the Communion. Felt less use for the minister than ever. Let the Master of the Feast alone speak to my heart." He felt at such times, as many of the Lord’s people have always done, that it is not the addresses of the ministers in serving the table, but the Supper itself, that ought to "satiate their souls with fatness." May 21.—It is affecting to us to read the following entry:—"This day I attained my twenty-first year. O how long and how worthlessly I have lived, Thou only knowest! Neff died in his thirty-first year; when shall I ?"[3] May 29.—He this day wrote very faithfully, yet very kindly, to one who seemed to him not a believer, and who, nevertheless, appropriated to herself the promises of God. "If you are wholly unassured of your being a believer, is it not a contradiction in terms to say that you are sure the believers’ promises belong to you? Are you an assured believer? If so, rejoice in your heirship; and yet rejoice with trembling; for that is the very character of God’s heirs. But are you unassured-nay, wholly unassured? then what mad presumption to say to your soul, that these promises, being in the Bible, must belong indiscriminately to all? It is too gross a contradiction for you to compass, except in word." He then shows that Christ’s free offer must be accepted by the sinner, and so the promises become his. "The sinner complies with the call or offer, ‘Come unto me’; and thereafter, but not before, can claim the annexed promise as his—‘I will give thee rest.’"

"August 14.—Partial fast, and seeking God’s face by prayer. This day thirty years, my late dear brother was born. O for more love, and then will come more peace." That same evening he wrote

the hymn, The Barren Fig-tree.

"October 17.—Private meditation exchanged for conversation. Here is the root of the evil—forsake God, and he forsakes us."

Some evening this month he had been reading Baxter's Call to the Unconverted. Deeply impressed with the affectionate and awfully solemn urgency of the man of God, he wrote,—

"Though Baxter's lips have long in silence hung, And death long hush'd that sinner-wakening tongue;

Yet still, though dead: he speaks aloud to all, And from the grave still issues forth his 'Call.'

Like some loud angel-voice from Zion Hill, The mighty echo rolls and rumbles still.

O grant that we, when sleeping in the dust, May thus speak forth the wisdom of the just."

Mr. M'Cheyne was peculiarly subject to attacks of fever, and by one of these was he laid down on a sick bed on November 15th. However, this attack was of short duration. On the 21st he writes—"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Learned more and more of the value of Jehovah Tzidkenu." He had, three days before, written his well-known hymn, "I once was a stranger," &c., entitled "Jehovah Tzidkenu, the Watchword of the Reformers." It was the fruit of a slight illness which had tried his soul, by setting it more immediately in view of the judgment-seat of Christ; and the hymn which he so sweetly sung reveals the sure and solid confidence of his soul. In reference to that same illness, he seems to have penned the following lines, November 24th:—

He tenderly binds up the broken in heart, The soul bowed down he will raise; For mourning the ointment of joy will impart, For heaviness, garments of praise.

Ah, come, then, and sing to the praise of our God, Who giveth and taketh away; Who first by his kindness, and then by his rod, Would teach us, poor sinners, to pray. For in the assembly of Jesus' first-born, Who anthems of gratitude raise;

Each heart has by great tribulation been torn, Each voice turned from wailing to praise.

"November 9.—Heard of Edward Irving's death. I look back upon him with awe, as on the saints and martyrs of old. A holy man in spite of all his delusions and errors. He is now with his God and Saviour, whom he wronged so much, yet, I am persuaded, loved so sincerely. How should we lean for wisdom, not on ourselves, but on the God of all grace!"

"Nov. 21.—If nothing else will do to sever me from my sins, Lord send me such sore and trying calamities as shall awake me from earthly slumbers. It must always be best to be alive to thee, whatever be the quickening instrument. I tremble as I write, for oh! on every hand do I see too likely occasions for sore afflictions."

"February 15. 1835.—Tomorrow I undergo my trials before the Presbytery. May God give me courage in the hour of need. What should I fear? If God see meet to put me into the ministry, who shall keep me back? If I be not meet, why should I be thrust forward? To thy service I desire to dedicate myself over and over again."

"March 1.—Bodily service. What change is there in the heart! Wild, earthly affections there are here; strong, coarse passions; bands both of iron and silk. But I thank thee, O my God, that they make me cry, ‘O wretched man!’ Bodily weakness, too, depresses me."

"March 29.—College finished on Friday last. My last appearance there. Life itself is vanishing fast. Make haste for eternity." In such records as these, we read God’s dealings with his soul up to the time when he was licensed to preach the gospel. His preparatory discipline, both of heart and of intellect, had been directed by the Great Head of the Church in a way that remarkably qualified him for the work he was to perform in the vineyard. His soul was prepared for the awful work of the ministry by much prayer, and much study of the Word of God; by affliction in. his person; by inward trials and sore temptations; by experience of the depth of corruption in his own heart; and by discoveries of the Saviour’s fullness of grace. He learnt experimentally to ask—"Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." 1 John 5:5. During the four years that followed his awakening, he was oftentimes under the many waters, but was ever raised again by the same Divine hand that had drawn him out at the first, till at length, though still often violently tossed, the vessel was able steadily to keep the summit of the wave. It appears that he learnt the way of salvation experimentally, ere he knew it accurately by theory and system; and thus no doubt it was that his whole ministry was little else than a giving out of his own inward life. The Visiting Society noticed above was much blessed to the culture of his soul, and not less so the Missionary Association and the Prayer Meeting connected with it. None were more regular at the hour of prayer than he, and none more frequently led up our praises to the throne. He was for some time Secretary to the Association, and interested himself deeply in details of missionary labours. Indeed, to the last day of his life, his thoughts often turned to foreign lands; and one of the last notes he wrote was to the Secretary of the Association in Edinburgh, expressing his unabated interest in their prosperity.

During the first years of his college course, his studies did not absorb his whole attention; but no sooner was the change on his soul begun, than his studies shared in the results. A deeper sense of responsibility led him to occupy his talents for the service of him who bestowed them. There have been few who, along with a devotedness of spirit that sought to be ever directly engaged in the Lord’s work, have nevertheless retained such continued and undecaying esteem for the advantages of study. While attending the usual literary and philosophical classes, he found time to turn his attention to Geology and Natural History. And often in his days of most successful preaching, when, next to his own soul, his parish and his flock were his only care, he has been known to express a regret that he had not laid up in former days more stores of all useful knowledge; for he found himself able to use the jewels of the Egyptians in the service of Christ. His previous studies would sometimes flash into his mind some happy illustration of Divine truth, at the very moment when he was most solemnly applying the glorious gospel to the most ignorant and vile. His own words will best show his estimate of study, and at the same time the prayerful manner in which he felt it should be carried on. "Do get on with your studies," he wrote to a young student in 1840. "Remember you are now forming the character of your future ministry in great measure, if God spare you. If you acquire slovenly or sleepy habits of study now, you will never get the better of it. Do everything in its own time. Do everything in earnest—if it is worth doing, then do it with all your might. Above all, keep much in the presence of God. Never see the face of man till you have seen his face who is our life, our all. Pray for others: pray for your teachers,

fellow-students," &c. To another he wrote—"Beware of the atmosphere of the classics. It is pernicious indeed; and you need much of the south wind breathing over the Scriptures to counteract it. True, we ought to know them; but only as chemists handle poisons—to discover their qualities, not to infect their blood with them." And again—"Pray that the Holy Spirit would not only make you a believing and holy lad, but make you wise in your studies also. A ray of Divine light in the soul sometimes clears up a mathematical problem wonderfully. The smile of God calms the spirit, and the left hand of Jesus holds up the fainting head, and his Holy Spirit quickens the affection; so that even natural studies go on a million times more easily and comfortably."

Before entering the Divinity Hall, he had attended a private class for the study of Hebrew; and having afterwards attended the two sessions of Dr Brunton's College Class, he made much progress in that language. He could consult the Hebrew original of the Old Testament with as much ease as most of our ministers are able to consult the Greek of the New.

It was about the time of his first year's attendance at the Hall that I began to know him as an intimate friend. During the summer vacations—that we might redeem the time—some of us who remained in town, when most of our fellow-students were gone to the country, used to meet once every week in the forenoon, for the purpose of investigating some point of Systematic Divinity, and stating to each other the amount and result of our private reading. At another time we met in a similar way, till we had overtaken the chief points of the Popish Controversy. Advancement in our acquaintance with the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures also brought us together; and one summer the study of Unfulfilled Prophecy assembled a few of us once a week, at an early morning hour, when, though our views differed much on particular points, we never failed to get food to our souls in the Scriptures we explored. But no society of this kind was more useful and pleasant to us than one which, from its object, received the name of Exegetical. It met during the session of the Theological Classes every Saturday morning at half-past six. The study of Biblical criticism, and whatever might cast light on the Word of God, was our aim; and these meetings were kept up regularly during four sessions. Mr. M'Cheyne spoke of himself as indebted to this society for much of that discipline of mind on Jewish literature and Scripture geography which was found to be so useful in the Mission of Inquiry to the Jews in after days.[4] But these helps in study were all the while no more than supplementary. The regular systematic studies of the Hall furnished the main provision for his mental culture. Under Dr Chalmers for Divinity, and under Dr Welsh for Church History, a course of four years afforded no ordinary advantages for enlarging the understanding. New fields of thought were daily opened up. His notes and his diary testify that he endeavoured to retain what he heard, and that he used to read as much of the books recommended by the professors as his time enabled him to overtake. Many years after, he thankfully called to mind lessons that had been taught in these classes. Riding one day with Mr. Hamilton (now of Regent Square, London) from Abernyte to Dundee, they were led to speak of the best mode of dividing a sermon. "I used," said he, "to despise Dr Welsh's rules at the time I heard him, but now I feel I must use them, for nothing is more needful for making a sermon memorable and impressive than a logical arrangement." His intellectual powers were of a high order—clear and distinct apprehension of his subject, and felicitous illustration, characterized him among all his companions. To an eager desire for wide acquaintance with truth in all its departments, and a memory strong and accurate in retaining what he found, there was added a remarkable candour in examining what claimed to be the truth. He had also an ingenious and enterprising mind-a mind

that could carry out what was suggested, when it did not strike out new light for itself. He possessed great powers of analysis; often his judgment discovered singular discrimination. His imagination seldom sought out objects of grandeur; for, as a friend has truly said of him, "he had a kind and quiet eye, which found out the living and beautiful in nature, rather than the majestic and sublime."

He might have risen to high eminence in the circles of taste and literature, but denied himself all such hopes, that he might win souls. With such peculiar talents as he possessed, his ministry might have, in any circumstances, attracted many; but these attractions were all made subsidiary to the single desire of awakening the dead in trespasses and sins. Nor would he have expected to be blessed to the salvation of souls unless he had himself been a monument of sovereign grace. In his esteem, "to be in Christ before being in the ministry" was a thing indispensable. He often pointed to those solemn words of Jeremiah (23:21), "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But i f they had stood in my counsel, and caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings."

It was with faith already in his heart that he went forward to the holy office of the ministry, receiving from his Lord the rod by which he was to do signs, and which, when it had opened rocks and made waters gush out, he never failed to replace upon the ark whence it was taken, giving glory to God! He knew not the way by which God was leading him; but even then he was under the guidance of the pillar-cloud. At this very period he wrote that hymn, They sing the song o f Moses. His course was then about to begin; but now that it has ended, we can look back and plainly see that the faith he therein expressed was not in vain.

ENDNOTES:

[1] He says of him on another occasion, June 8, 1834—“A man greatly beloved, of whom the world was not worthy.” “An apostolic man.” His own calm deep holiness resembled in many respects Mr Martin’s daily walk.

[2] Son of the minister of Drumelzier—very promising and very amiable.

[3] It is worthy of notice how often the Lord has done much work by a few years of holy labour. In our Church, G. Gillespie and J. Durham died at thirty-six; Hugh Binning at twenty-six; Andrew Gray when scarcely at twenty-two. Of our witnesses, Patrick Hamilton was cut off at twenty-four, and Hugh M’Kail at twenty-six. In other churches we might mention many, such as John Janeway at twenty-three, David Brainerd at thirty, and Henry Martyn at thirty-two. Theirs was a short life, filled up with usefulness, and crowned with glory. O to be as they!

[4] The members of this Society were—Revs. William Laughton, now minister of St Thomas’s, Greenock, in connection with the Free Church; Thomas Brown, Free Church, Kinneff; William Wilson, Free Church, Carmylie; Horatius Bonar, Free Church, Kelso; Andrew A. Bonar, Free Church, Collace; Robert M. M’Cheyne; Alexander Somerville, Free Church, Anderston, Glasgow; John Thomson, Mariners’ Free Church, Leith; Robert K. Hamilton, Madras; John Burne, for some time at Madeira; Patrick Borrowman Free Church, Glencairn; Walter Wood, Free Church, Westruther; Henry Moncrieff, Free Church, Kilbride; James Cochrane Established Church, Cupar; John Miller, Secretary to Free Church Special Commission; G. Smeaton, Free Church, Auch-

terarder; Robert Kinnear, Free Church, Moffat; and W. B. Clarke, Free Church, Half-Morton. Every meeting was opened and closed with prayer. Minutes of the discussion were kept; and the Essays read were reserved in volumes. A very characteristic essay of Mr. M'Cheyne's is, "Lebanon and its Scenery" (inserted in the Remains), wherein he adduces the evidence of travelers for facts and customs which himself was afterwards to see. Often in 1839, pleasant remembrances of these days of youthful study were suggested by what we actually witnessed; and in the essay referred to I find an interesting coincidence. He writes—"What a refreshing sight to his eye, yet undimmed with age, after resting forty years on the monotonous scenery of the desert, now to rest on Zion's olive-clad hills, and Lebanon, with its vine-clad base and overhanging forests, and towering peaks of snow." This was the very impression on our minds when we ourselves came up from the wilderness, as expressed in the Narrative chap. 2.—"May 29. Next morning we saw at a distance a range of hills, running north and south, called by the Arabs Djebel Khalie. After wandering so many days in the wilderness, with its vast monotonous plains of level sand, the sight of these distant mountains was a pleasant relief to the eye; and we thought we could understand a little of the feeling with which Moses, after being forty years in the desert, would pray, 'I pray thee let me go over.'—Deuteronomy 3:25.

04.02. His Labours in the Vineyard Before Ordination

CHAPTER II HIS LABOURS IN THE VINEYARD BEFORE ORDINATION

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him:"

Psalms 126:6

While he was still only undergoing a student's usual examinations before the Presbytery, in the spring and summer of 1835, several applications were made to him by ministers in the church, who desired to secure his services for their part of the vineyard. He was especially urged to consider the field of labour at Larbert and Dunipace, near Stirling, under Mr. John Bonar, the pastor of these united parishes. This circumstance led him (as is often done in such cases) to ask the Presbytery of Edinburgh, under whose superintendence he had hitherto carried on his studies, to transfer the remainder of his public trials to another Presbytery, where there would be less press of business to occasion delay. This request being readily granted, his connection with Dumfriesshire led him. to the Presbytery of Annan, who licensed him to preach the gospel on 1st July 1835. His feelings at the moment appear from a record of his own in the evening of the day: "Preached three probationary discourses in Annan Church, and, after an examination in Hebrew, was solemnly licensed to preach the gospel by Mr. Monylaws, the Moderator. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me be stirred up. to praise and magnify his holy name!' What I have so long desired as the highest honor of man, thou at length givest me-me who dare scarcely use the words of Paul, 'Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.' Felt somewhat solemnized, though unable to feel my unworthiness as I ought. Be clothed with humility." An event occurred the week before which cast a solemnizing influence on him, and on his after fellow-traveler and brother in the gospel, who was licensed by another Presbytery that same day. This event was the lamented death of the Rev. John Brown Patterson, of Falkirk—one whom the Lord had gifted with pre-eminent eloquence and learning, and who was using all for his Lord, when cut off by fever. He had spoken much before his death of the awfulness of a pastor's charge, and his early death sent home the lesson to many, with the warning that the pastor's account of souls might be suddenly required of him. On the following Sabbath Mr. M'Cheyne preached for the first time, in Ruthwell Church, near Dumfries, on "the Pool of Bethesda"; and in the afternoon, on "the Strait Gate." He writes that evening in his diary: "Found it a more awfully solemn thing than I had imagined to announce Christ authoritatively; yet a glorious privilege!" The week after (Saturday July 11), "Lord, put me into thy service when and where thou pleasest. In thy hand all my qualities will be put to their appropriate end. Let me, then, have no anxieties." Next day, also, after preaching in St John's Church, Leith: "Remembered, before going into the pulpit, the confession which says[1] 'We have been more anxious about the messenger than the message.'" In preaching that day, he states, "It came across me in the pulpit, that if spared to be a minister, I might enjoy sweet flashes of communion with God in that situation. The mind is entirely wrought up to speak for God. It is

possible, then, that more vivid acts of faith may be gone through then, than in quieter and sleepier moments."

It was not till the 7th of November that he began his labours at Larbert. In the interval, he preached in various places, and many began to perceive the peculiar sweetness of the word in his lips. In accepting the invitation to labour in the sphere proposed, he wrote: "It has always been my aim, and it is my prayer, to have no plans with regard to myself—well assured as I am, that the place where the Saviour sees meet to place me, must ever be the best place for me." The parish to which he had come was very large, containing six thousand souls. The parish church is at Larbert; but through the exertions of Mr. Bonar, many years ago, a second church was erected for the people of Dunipace. Mr. Hanna, afterwards minister of Stirling, had preceded Mr. M'Cheyne in the duties of assistant in his field of labour; and Mr. M'Cheyne now entered on it with a fully devoted and zealous heart, although in a weak state of health. As assistant, it was his part to preach every alternate Sabbath at Larbert and Dunipace, and during the week to visit among the population of both these districts, according as he felt himself enabled in body and soul. There was a marked difference between the two districts in their general features of character; but equal labour was bestowed on both by the minister and his assistant; and often did their prayer ascend that the windows of heaven might be opened over the two sanctuaries. Souls have been saved there. Often, however, did the faithful pastor mingle his tears with those of his younger fellow-soldier, complaining, "Lord, who hath believed our report?" There was much sowing in faith; nor was this sowing abandoned even when the returns seemed most inadequate.

Mr. M'Cheyne had great delight in remembering that Larbert was one of the places where, in other days, that holy man of God, Robert Bruce, had laboured and prayed. Writing at an after period from the Holy Land, he expressed the wish, "May the spirit be poured upon Larbert as in Bruce's days." But more than all associations, the souls of the people, whose salvation he longed for, were ever present to his mind. A letter to Mr. Bonar, in 1837, from Dundee, shews us his yearnings over them. "What an interest I feel in Larbert and Dunipace. It is like the land of my birth. Will the Sun of Righteousness ever rise upon it, making its hills and valleys bright with the light of the knowledge of Jesus!" No sooner was he settled in his chamber here, than he commenced his work. With him, the commencement of all labour invariably consisted in the preparation of his own soul. The forerunner of each day's visitations was a calm season of private devotion during morning hours. The walls of his chamber were witnesses of his prayerfulness—I believe of his tears, as well as of his cries. The pleasant sound of psalms often issued from his room at an early hour. Then followed the reading of the Word for his own sanctification; and few have so fully realized the blessing of the first Psalm. His leaf did not wither, for his roots were in the waters. It was here, too, that he began to study so closely the works of Jonathan Edwards—reckoning them a mine to be wrought, and if wrought, sure to repay the toil. Along with this author, the Letters of Samuel Rutherford were often in his hand. Books of general knowledge he occasionally perused; but now it was done with the steady purpose of finding in them some illustration of spiritual truth. He rose from reading Insect Architecture, with the observation, "God reigns in a community of ants and ichneumons, as visibly as among living men or mighty seraphim!" His desire to grow in acquaintance with Scripture was very intense; and both Old and New Testament were his regular study. He loved to range over the wide revelation of God. "He would be a sorry student of this world," said he to a friend, "who should for ever confine his gaze to the fruitful fields and well-watered gardens of this

cultivated earth. He could have no true idea of what the world was, unless he had stood upon the rocks of our mountains and seen the bleak muirs and mosses of our barren land; unless he had paced the quarter-deck when the vessel was out of sight of land, and seen the waste of waters without any share upon the horizon. Just so, he would be a sorry student of the Bible, who would not know all that God has inspired: who would not examine into the most barren chapters to collect the good for which they were intended; who would not strive to understand all the bloody battles which are chronicled, that he might find ‘bread out of the eater, and honey out of the lion.'"—(June, 1836.) His anxiety to have every possible help to holiness led him to notice what are the disadvantages of those who are not daily stirred up by the fellowship of more advanced believers. "I have found, by some experience, that in the country here my watch does not go so well as it used to do in town. By small and gradual changes I find it either gains or loses, and I am surprised to find myself different in time from all the world, and, what is worse, from the sun. The simple explanation is, that in town I met with a steeple in every street, and a good-going clock upon it; and so any aberrations in my watch were soon noticed and easily corrected. And just so I sometimes think it may be with that inner watch, whose hands point not to time but to eternity. By gradual and slow changes the wheels of my soul lag behind, or the springs of passions become too powerful; and I have no living timepiece with which I may compare, and by which I may amend my going. You will say that I may always have the sun: And so it should be; but we have many clouds which obscure the sun from our weak eyes."—(Letter to Rev. H. Bonar, Kelso.) From the first he fed others by what he himself was feeding upon. His teaching was in a manner the development of his soul’s experience. It was a giving out of the inward life. He loved to come up from the pastures wherein the Chief Shepherd had met him—to lead the flock entrusted to his care to the spots where he found nourishment. In the field of his labour, he found enough of work to overwhelm the Spirit. The several collieries and the Carron Iron-works furnish a population who are, for the most part, either sunk in deep indifference to the truth, or are opposed to it in the spirit of infidelity. Mr. M’Cheyne at once saw that the pastor whom he had come to aid, whatever was the measure of his health, and zeal, and perseverance, had duties laid on him which were altogether beyond the power of man to overtake. When he made a few weeks’ trial, the field appeared more boundless, and the mass of souls more impenetrable, than he had ever conceived.

It was probably, in some degree, his experience at this time that gave him such deep sympathy with the Church Extension Scheme, as a truly noble and Christian effort for bringing the glad tidings to the doors of a population who must otherwise remain neglected, and were themselves willing so to live and die. He conveyed his impressions on this subject to a friend abroad, in the following terms:—"There is a soul-destroying cruelty in the cold-hearted opposition which is made to the multiplication of ministers in such neglected and over-grown districts as these. If one of our Royal Commissioners would but consent to undergo the bodily fatigue that a minister ought to undergo in visiting merely the sick and dying of Larbert (let alone the visitation of the whole, and preparation for the pulpit), and that for one month, I would engage that if he be able to rise out of his bed by the end of it, he would change his voice and manner at the Commission Board." A few busy weeks passed over, occupied from morning to night in such ‘cares and toils, when another part of the discipline he was to undergo was sent. In the end of December, strong oppression of the heart and an irritating cough caused some of his friends to fear that his lungs were affected; and for some weeks he was laid aside from public duty. On examination, it was found that though there was a dullness in the right lung, yet the material of the lungs was not affected. For a time,

however, the air-vessels were so clogged and irritated, that if he had continued to preach, disease would have quickly ensued. But this also was soon removed, and, under cautious management, he resumed his work. This temporary illness served to call forth the extreme sensitiveness of his soul to the responsibilities of his office. At its commencement—having gone to Edinburgh "in so sweet a sunshine morning that God seemed to have chosen it for him"—he wrote to Mr. Bonar—"If I am not recovered before the third Sabbath, I fear I shall not be able to bear upon my conscience the responsibility of leaving you any longer to labour alone, bearing unaided the burden of 6000 souls. No, my dear Sir, I must read the will of God aright in his providence, and give way, when he bids me, to fresh and abler workmen. I hope and pray that it may be his will to restore me again to you and your parish, with a heart tutored by sickness to speak more and more as dying to dying." Then, mentioning two of the sick—"Poor A. D. and C. H., I often think of them. I can do no more for their good, except pray for them. Tell them that I do this without ceasing." The days when a holy pastor, who knows the blood-sprinkled way to the Father, is laid aside, are probably as much a proof of the kindness of God to his flock as days of health and activity. He is occupied, during this season of retirement, in discovering the plagues of his heart, and in going in, like Moses, to plead with God face to face for his flock, and for his own soul. Mr. M'Cheyne believed that God had this end in view with him; and that the Lord should thus deal with him at his entrance into the vineyard made him ponder these dealings the more. "Paul asked," says he, "What wilt thou have me to do?" and it was answered, "I will show him what great things he must suffer for my name's sake." Thus it may be with me. I have been too anxious to do great things. The lust of praise has ever been my besetting sin; and what more befitting school could be found for me than that of suffering alone, away from the eye and ear of man." Writing again to Mr. Bonar, he tells him: "I feel distinctly that the whole of my labour during this season of sickness and pain, should be in the way of prayer and intercession. And yet, so strongly does Satan work in our deceitful hearts, I scarcely remember a season wherein I have been more averse to these duties. I try to 'build myself up in my most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keeping myself in the love of God, and looking for the mercy of the Lord Jesus unto eternal life.' That text of Jude has peculiar beauties for me at this season. If it be good to come under the love of God once, surely it is good to keep ourselves there. And yet how reluctant we are. I cannot doubt that boldness is offered me to enter into the holiest of all; I cannot doubt my right and title to enter continually by the new and bloody way; I cannot doubt that when I do enter in, I stand not only forgiven, but accepted in the Beloved; I cannot doubt that when I do enter in, the Spirit is willing and ready to descend like a dove, to dwell in my bosom as a Spirit of prayer and peace, enabling me to 'pray in the Holy Ghost;' and that Jesus is ready to rise up as my intercessor with the Father, praying for me though not for the world; and that the prayer-hearing God is ready to bend his ear to requests which he delights to hear and answer. I cannot doubt that thus to dwell in God is the true blessedness of my nature; and yet, strange unaccountable creature! I am too often unwilling to enter in. I go about and about the sanctuary, and I sometimes press in through the rent veil, and see the blessedness of dwelling there to be far better than that of the tents of wickedness; yet it is certain that. I do not dwell within."—"My prayers follow you, especially to the sickbeds of A. D. and C. H. I hope they still survive, and that Christ may yet be glorified in them." On resuming his labours, he found a residence in Carronvale. From this pleasant spot he used to ride out to his work. But pleasant as the spot was, yet being only partially recovered, he was not satisfied; he lamented that he was unable to overtake what a stronger laborer would have accomplished. He often cast a regretful look at the collieries; and remembering

them still at a later period, he reproached himself with neglect, though most unjustly. "The places which I left utterly unbroken in upon are Kinnaird and Milton. Both of these rise up against my conscience, particularly the last, through which I have ridden so often." It was not the comfort, but the positive usefulness of the ministry, that he envied; and he judged of places by their fitness to promote this great end. He said of a neighboring parish, which he had occasion to visit—"The manse is altogether too sweet; other men could hardly live there without saying, ‘This is my rest.’ I don’t think ministers’ manses should ever be so beautiful." A simple incident was overruled to promote the ease and fluency of his pulpit ministrations. From the very beginning of his ministry, he reprobated the custom of reading sermons, believing that to do so does exceedingly weaken the freedom and natural fervor of the messenger in delivering his message. Neither did he recite what he had written. But his custom was to impress on his memory the substance of what he had beforehand carefully written, and then to speak as he found liberty. One morning, as he rode rapidly along to Dunipace, his written sermons were dropped on the wayside. This accident prevented him having the opportunity of preparing in his usual manner; but he was enabled to preach with more than usual freedom. For the first time in his life, he discovered that he possessed the gift of extemporaneous composition, and learned, to his own surprise, that he had more composedness of mind and command of language than he had believed. This discovery, however, did not in the least degree diminish his diligent preparation. Indeed, the only use that he made of the incident at the time it occurred was, to draw a lesson of dependence on God’s own immediate blessing, rather than on the satisfactory preparation made. "One thing always fills the cup of my consolation, that God may work by the meanest and poorest words, as well as by the most polished and ornate—yea, perhaps more readily, that the glory may be all his own." His hands were again full, distributing the bread of life in fellowship with Mr. Bonar. The progress of his own soul, meanwhile, may be traced in some of the few entries that occur in his diary during this period :

"February 21. 1836—Sabbath.—Blessed be the Lord for another day of the Son of Man. Resumed my diary, long broken off ; not because I do not feel the disadvantages of it—making you assume feelings and express rather what you wish to be than what you are—but because the advantages seem greater. It ensures sober reflection on the events of the day as seen in God’s eye. Preached twice in Larbert, on the righteousness of God, Romans 1:16. In the morning was more engaged in preparing the head than the heart. This has been frequently my error, and I have always felt the evil of it, especially in prayer. Reform it, then, O Lord."

Feb. 27.—Preached in Dunipace with more heart than ever I remember to have done, on Romans 5:10, owing to the gospel nature of the subject and prayerful preparation. Audience smaller than usual! How happy and strange is the feeling when God gives the soul composure to stand and plead for him. O that it were altogether for him I plead, not for myself."

"March 5.—Preached in Larbert with very much comfort, owing chiefly to my remedying the error of 21st Feb. Therefore the heart and the mouth were full. ‘Enlarge my heart, and I shall run,’ said David. ‘Enlarge my heart, and I shall preach.’" In this last remark we see the germ of his remarkably solemn ministry. His heart was filled, and his lips then spoke what he felt within his heart. He gave out not merely living water, but living water drawn at the springs that he had himself drank of; and is not this a true gospel ministry? Some venture to try what they consider a more intellectual method of addressing the conscience; but ere a minister attempts this mode, he

ought to see that he is one who is able to afford more deep and anxious preparation of heart than other men. Since the intellectual part of the discourse is not that which is most likely to be an arrow in the conscience, those pastors who are intellectual men must bestow ten-fold more prayerfulness on their work, if they would have either their own or their people’s souls affected under their word. If we are ever to preach with compassion for the perishing, we must ourselves be moved by those same views of sin and righteousness which moved the human soul of Jesus. (See Psalms 38:1-22 and Psalms 55:1-23)

About this time he occasionally contributed papers to the Christian Herald: one of these was On sudden Conversions, showing that Scripture led us to expect such. During this month, he seems to have written the "Lines on Mungo Park," one of the pieces which attracted the notice of Professor Wilson. But whatever he engaged in, his aim was to honor his Master. I find him, after hearing a sermon by another, remarking (April 3rd), "Some things powerful; but I thirst to hear more of Christ." On Sabbath, the 6th, he writes, "Preached with some tenderness of heart. O why should I not weep, as Jesus did over Jerusalem? Evening—Instructing two delightful Sabbath-schools. Much bodily weariness. Gracious kindness of God in giving rest to the weary."

"April 13.—Went to Stirling to hear Dr Duff once more upon his system. With greater warmth and energy than ever. He kindles as he goes. Felt almost constrained to go the whole length of his system with him. If it were only to raise up an audience, it would be defensible; but when it is to raise up teachers it is more than defensible. I am now made willing, if God shall open the way, to go to India. Here am I; send me!" The missionary feeling in his soul continued all his life. The Lord had really made him willing; and this preparedness to go anywhere completed his preparation for unselfish, self-denied work at home. Must there not be somewhat of this missionary tendency in all true ministers? Is any one truly the Lord’s messenger who is not quite willing to go when and where the Lord calls? Is it justifiable in any to put aside a call from the north, on the ground that he wishes one from the south? We must be found in the position of Isaiah, if we are to be really sent of God.

"April 24.—O that this day’s labour may be blessed! and not mine alone, but all thy faithful servants all over the world, till thy Sabbath come."

"April 26.—Visiting in Carron-shore. Well received everywhere. Truly a pleasant labour. Cheered me much. Preached to them afterwards from Proverbs 1:1-33."

"May 8.—Communion in Larbert. Served as an elder and help to the faithful. Partook with some glimpses of faith and joy. Served by a faithful old minister (Mr. Dempster of Denny), one taught of God. This morning stood by the dying—evening, stood by the dead, poor J. F. having died last night. I laid my hand on her cold forehead, and tried to shut her eyes. Lord give me strength for living to thee!—strength also for a dying hour."

"May 15.—This day an annular eclipse of the sun. Kept both the services together in order to be in time. Truly a beautiful sight to see the shining edge of the sun all round the dark disc of the moon. Lord, one day thy hand shall put out those candles; for there shall be no need of the sun to lighten the happy land; the Lamb is the light thereof—a sun that cannot be eclipsed—that cannot go down."

"May 17.—Visited thirteen families, and addressed them all in the evening in the school, on Jeremiah 50:4, ‘Going and weeping:’ Experienced some enlargement of soul; said some plain things; and had some desire for their salvation, that God might be praised."

"May 21.—Preparation for the Sabbath. My birth-day. I have lived twenty-three years. Blessed be my Rock. Though I am a child in knowledge of my Bible and of Thee, yet use me for what a child can do, or a child can suffer. How few sufferings I have had in the year that is past, except in my own body. Oh! that as my day is my strength may be. Give me strength for a suffering and for a dying hour!"

"May 22.—O Lord, when thou workest, all discouragements vanish—when thou art away, any thing is a discouragement. Blessed be God for such a day-one of a thousand! O why not always this? Watch and pray." Being in Edinburgh this month, during the sitting of the General Assembly, he used the opportunity of revisiting some of his former charge in the Canongate. "J. S., a far-off inquirer, but surely God is leading. His hand draws out these tears. Interesting visits to L.; near death, and still in the same mind. I cannot but hope that some faith is here. Saw Mrs. M.; many tears: felt much, though I am still doubtful, and in the dark. Thou knowest, Lord!"

"June 11.—Yesterday up in Dunipace. It would seem as if I were afraid to name the name of Christ. Saw many worldly people greatly needing a word in season, yet could not get up my heart to speak. What I did failed almost completely. I am not worthy, Lord! To-day sought to prepare my heart for the coming Sabbath. After the example of Boston, whose life I have been reading, examined my heart with prayer and fasting. 1. Does my heart really close with the offer of salvation by Jesus? Is it my choice to be saved in the way which gives him all the praise, and me none? Do I not only see it to be the Bible way of salvation, but does it cordially approve itself to my heart as delightful? Lord search me and try me, for I cannot but answer, Yes, yes. 2. Is it the desire of my heart to be made altogether holy? Is there any sin I wish to retain? Is sin a grief to me, the sudden risings and overcomings thereof especially? Lord, thou knowest all things—thou knowest that I hate all sin, and desire to be made altogether like thee. It is the sweetest word in the Bible—‘Sin shall not have dominion over you.’ O then that I might lie low in the dust—the lower the better—that Jesus’ righteousness and Jesus’ strength alone be admired. Felt much deadness and much grief, that I cannot grieve for this deadness. Towards evening revived. Got a calm spirit through psalmody and prayer."

"June 12—Sabbath.—To-day a sinner preached Jesus, the same Jesus who has done all things for him, and that so lately! A day of much help, of some earnest looking-up of the heart to that alone quickening power, of much temptation to flattery and pride. O for breathing gales of spiritual life! Evening—Somewhat helped to lay Jesus before little children in his beauty and excellency. Much fatigue, yet some peace. Surely a day in thy courts is better than a thousand."

"June 15.—Day of visiting—rather a happy one—in Carron-shore. Large meeting in the evening. Felt very happy after it, though mourning for bitter speaking o f the gospel. Surely it is a gentle message, and should be spoken with angelic tenderness, especially by such a needy sinner." Of this bitterness in preaching, he had little indeed in after days; yet so sensible was he of its being quite natural to all of us, that oftentimes he made it the subject of conversation, and used to grieve over himself if he had spoken with anything less than solemn compassion. I remember on one occasion, when we met, he asked what my last Sabbath’s subject had been. It had been, "The

wicked shall be turned into hell." On hearing this awful text, he asked, "Were you able to preach it with tenderness?" Certain it is that the tone of reproach and upbraiding is widely different from the voice of solemn warning. It is not saying hard things that pierces the consciences of our people; it is the voice of Divine love heard amid the thunder. The sharpest point of the two-edged sword is not death but life; and against self-righteous souls this latter ought to be more used than the former. For such souls can hear us tell of the open gates of hell and the unquenchable fire far more unconcernedly than of the gates of heaven wide-open for their immediate return. When we preach that the glad tidings were intended to impart immediate assurance o f eternal life to every sinner that believes them, we strike deeper upon the proud enmity of the world to God, than when we show the eternal curse and the second death.

"June 19—Sabbath.—Wet morning. Preached at Dunipace to a small audience, on Parable of the Tares. I thank God for that blessed parable. In both discourses I can look back on many hateful thoughts of pride, and self admiration, and love of praise, stealing the heart out of the service."

"June 22.—Carron-shore. My last. Some tears; yet I fear some like the messenger, not the message; and I fear I am so vain as to love that love. Lord, let it not be so. Perish my honor, and let Thine be exalted for ever."

"June 26—True Sabbath-day. Golden sky. Full church, and more liveliness than sometimes. Shall I call the liveliness of this day a gale of the Spirit, or was all natural? I know that all was not of grace: the self-admiration, the vanity, the desire of honor, the bitterness—these were all breaths of earth or hell. But was there no grace? Lord, thou knowest. I dare not wrong thee by saying-No! Larbert Sabbath school, with the same liveliness and joy. Domestic work with the same. Praised be God! O that the savor of it may last through the week! By this may I test if it be all of nature, or much of grace. Alas! how I tremble for my Monday mornings—these seasons of lifelessness. Lord, bless the seeds sown this day in the hearts of my friends, by the hand of my friends, and all over the world,—hasten the harvest!"

"July 3.—After a week of working and hurried preparation, a Sabbath of mingled peace and pain. Called, morning before preaching, to see Mrs. E. dying. Preached on the Jailor—discomposedly—with some glimpses of the genuine truth as it is in Jesus. Felt there was much mingling of experience. At times the congregation was lightened up from their dull flatness, and then they sunk again into lethargy. O Lord, make me hang on thee to open their hearts, thou opener of Lydia’s heart. I fear thou wilt not bless my preaching, until I am brought thus to hang on thee. O keep not back a blessing for my sin! Afternoon—On the Highway of the Redeemed, with more ease and comfort. Felt the truth sometimes boiling up from my heart into my words. Some glimpses of tenderness, yet much less of that spirit than the last two Sabbaths. Again saw the dying woman. O when will I plead, with my tears and inward yearnings, over sinners! O, compassionate Lord, give me to know what manner of spirit I am of ! give me thy gentle spirit, that neither strives nor cries. Much weariness, want of prayerfulness, and want of cleaving to Christ:" Tuesday the 5th, being the anniversary of his license to preach the Gospel, he writes:—"Eventful week: One year I have preached Jesus, have I ? or myself ? I have often preached myself also, but Jesus I have preached."

About this time he again felt the hand of affliction, though it did not continue long. Yet it was plain to him now that personal trouble was to be one of the ingredients of that experience which helped

to give a peculiar tone to his ministry.

"July 8.—Since Tuesday have been laid up with illness. Set by once more for a season to feel my unprofitableness and cure my pride. When shall this self-choosing temper be healed? ‘Lord, I will preach, run, visit, wrestle,’ said I. ‘No, thou shalt lie in thy bed and suffer,’ said the Lord. To-day missed some fine opportunities of speaking a word for Christ. The Lord saw I would have spoken as much for my own honor as his, and, therefore, shut my mouth. I see a man cannot be a faithful minister, until he preaches Christ for Christ’s sake—until he gives up striving to attract people to himself, and seeks only to attract them to Christ. Lord, give me this! To-night some glimpses of humbling; and, therefore, some wrestling in social prayer. But my prayers are scarcely to be called prayer." Then, in the evening, "This day my brother has been five years absent from the body and present with the Lord, and knows more and loves more than all earthly saints together. Till the Day break and the shadows flee away, turn, my Beloved!"

"July 10.—I fear I am growing more earthly in some things. To-day I felt a difficulty in bringing in spiritual conversation immediately after preaching, when my bosom should be burning. Excused myself from dining out from other than the grand reason; though checked and corrected myself. Evening—Insensibly slid into worldly conversation. Let these things be corrected in me, O Lord, by the heart being more filled with love to Jesus; and more ejaculatory prayer."

"July 17—Sabbath.—O that I may remember my own word this day: that the hour of communion is the hour for the foxes—the little foxes—to spoil the vine. Two things that defile this day in looking back, are love of praise running through all, and consenting to listen to worldly talk at all. O that these may keep me humble and be my burden, leading me to the cross. Then, Satan, thou wilt be outwitted!"

"July 19.—Died, this day, W. M’Cheyne, my cousin-german, Relief minister, Kelso. O how I repent of our vain controversies on Establishments when we last met, and that we spoke so little of Jesus! O that we had spoken more one to another! Lord, teach me to be always speaking as dying to dying."

"July 24.—Dunipace Communion.—Heard Mr. Purves of Jedburgh preach, ‘Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.’ The only way to come to ordinances, and to draw from the well, is to come with the matter of acceptance settled, believing God’s anger to be turned away. Truly a precious view of the freeness of the gospel very refreshing. My soul needs to be roused much to apprehend this truth."

Above (July 3) he spoke of "mingling experience with the genuine truth as it is in Jesus." It is to this that he refers again, in the last paragraph. His deep acquaintance with the human heart and passions often led him to dwell at greater length, not only on those topics whereby the sinner might be brought to discover his guilt, but also on marks that would evidence a change, than on "the Glad Tidings." And yet he ever felt that these blessed tidings, addressed to souls in the very gall of bitterness, were the true theme of the minister of Christ; and never did he preach other than a full salvation ready for the chief of sinners. From the very first, also, he carefully avoided the error of those who rather speculate or doctrinize about the Gospel, than preach the Gospel itself. Is not the true idea of preaching that of one, like Ahimaaz, coming with all-important tidings, and intent on making these tidings known? Occupied with the facts he has to tell, he has no heart to

speculate on mere abstractions; nay, he is apt to forget what language he employs, excepting so far as the very grandeur of the tidings gives a glow of eloquence to his words. The glorious fact, "By this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins," is the burden of every sermon. The crier is sent to the openings of the gate by his Lord—to herald forth this one infinitely important truth through the whole creation under heaven.

He seems invariably to have applied for his personal benefit what he gave out to his people. We have already noticed how he used to feed on the Word, not in order to prepare himself for his people, but for personal edification. To do so was a fundamental rule with him; and all pastors will feel that, if they are to prosper in their own souls, they must so use the word—sternly refusing to admit the idea of feeding others, until satiated themselves. And for similar ends, it is needful that we let the truth we hear preached sink down into our own souls. We, as well as our people, must drink in the falling shower. Mr. M'Cheyne did so. It is common to find him speaking thus:—"July 31, Sabbath—Afternoon, on Judas betraying Christ; much more tenderness than ever I felt before. O that I might abide in the bosom of him who washed Judas' feet, and dipped his hand in the same dish with him, and warned him, and grieved over him—that I might catch the infection of his love, of his tenderness, so wonderful, so unfathomable."

Coming home on a Sabbath evening (Aug. 7th) from Torwood Sabbath-school, a person met him who suggested an opportunity of usefulness. There were two families of gypsies encamped at Torwood, within his reach. He was weary with a long day's labour; but instantly, as was his custom on such a call, set off to find them. By the side of their wood-fire, he opened out the parable of the Lost Sheep, and pressed it on their souls in simple terms. He then knelt down in prayer for them, and left them somewhat impressed and very grateful. At this time a youthful parishioner, for whose soul he felt much anxiety, left his father's roof. Ever watchful for souls, he seized this opportunity of laying before him more fully the things belonging to his peace.

LARBERT, August 8, 1836. My dear G——, You will be surprised to hear from me. I have often wished to be better acquainted with you; but in these sad parishes we cannot manage to know and be intimate with every one we would desire. And now you have left your father's roof and our charge; still my desires go after you, as well as the kind thoughts of many others; and since I cannot now speak to you, I take this way of expressing my thoughts to you. I do not know in what light you look upon me, whether as a grave and morose minister, or as one who might be a companion and friend; but, really, it is so short a while since I was just like you, when I enjoyed the games which you now enjoy, and read the books which you now read, that I never can think of myself as anything more than a boy. This is one great reason why I write to you. The same youthful blood flows in my veins that flows in yours—the same fancies and buoyant passions dance in my bosom as in yours—so that, when I would persuade you to come with me to the same Saviour, and to walk the rest of your life "led by the Spirit of God," I am not persuading you to anything beyond your years. I am not like a grey headed grandfather—then you might answer all I say by telling me that you are a boy. No; I am almost as much a boy as you are; as fond of happiness and of life as you are; as fond of scampering over the hills, and seeing all that is to be seen, as you are.

Another thing that persuades me to write you, my dear boy, is, that I have felt in my own experience the want of having a friend to direct and counsel me. I had a kind brother as you have,

who taught me many things: he gave me a Bible, and persuaded me to read it; he tried to train me as a gardener trains the apple-tree upon the wall, but all in vain. I thought myself far wiser than he, and would always take my own way; and many a time, I well remember, I have seen him reading his Bible, or shutting his closet door to pray, when I have been dressing to go to some frolic, or some dance of folly. Well, this dear friend and brother died; and though his death made a greater impression upon me than ever his life had done, still I found the misery of being friendless. I do not mean that I had no relations and worldly friends, for I had many; but I had no friend who cared for my soul. I had none to direct me to the Saviour—none to awaken my slumbering conscience—none to tell me about the blood of Jesus washing away all sin—none to tell me of the Spirit who is so willing to change the heart, and give the victory over passions. I had no minister to take me by the hand, and say, "Come with me, and we will do thee good." Yes, I had one friend and minister, but that was Jesus himself, and he led me in a way that makes me give him, and him only, all the praise. Now, though Jesus may do this again, yet the more common way with him is to use earthly guides. Now, if I could supply the place of such a guide to you, I should be happy. To be a finger-post is all that I want to be—pointing out the way. This is what I so much wanted myself—this is what you need not want, unless you wish.

Tell me, dear G., would you work less pleasantly through the day—would you walk the streets with a more doleful step—would you eat your meat with less gladness of heart—would you sleep less tranquilly at night, if you had the forgiveness of sins—that is, if all your wicked thoughts and deeds—lies, thefts, and Sabbath-breakings—were all blotted out of God’s book of remembrance? Would this make you less happy do you think? You dare not say it would. But would the forgiveness of sins not make you more happy than you are? Perhaps you will tell me that you are very happy as you are. I quite believe you. I know that I was very happy when I was unforgiven. I know that I had great pleasure in many sins—in Sabbath-breaking for instance. Many a delightful walk I have had—speaking my own words, thinking my own thoughts, and seeking my own pleasure on God’s holy day. I fancy few boys were ever happier in an unconverted state than I was. No sorrow clouded my brow—no tears filled my eyes, unless over some nice story-book; so that I know that you say quite true, when you say that you are happy as you are. But ah! is not this just the saddest thing of all, that you should be happy whilst you are a child of wrath—that you should smile, and eat, and drink, and be merry, and sleep sound, when this very night you may be in hell! Happy while unforgiven!—a terrible happiness. It is like the Hindu widow who sits upon the funeral pile with her dead husband, and sings songs of joy when they are setting fire to the wood with which she is to be burned. Yes, you may be quite happy in this way, till you die, my boy; but when you look back from hell, you will say, it was a miserable kind of happiness. Now, do you think it would not give you more happiness to be forgiven—to be able to put on Jesus, and say, "God’s anger is turned away?" Would not you be happier at work, and happier in the house, and happier in your bed? I can assure you, from all that ever I have felt of it, the pleasures of being forgiven are as superior to the pleasures of an unforgiven man, as heaven is higher than hell. The peace of being forgiven reminds me of the calm, blue sky, which no earthly clamors can disturb. It lightens all labour, sweetens every morsel of bread, and makes a sick bed all soft and downy—yea, it takes away the scowl of death. Now, forgiveness may be yours now. It is not given to those who are good. It is not given to any because they are less wicked than others. It is given only to those who, feeling that their sins have brought a curse on them which they cannot lift off, "look unto Jesus," as bearing all away.

Now, my dear boy, I have no wish to weary you. If you are anything like what I was, you will have yawned many a time already over this letter. However, if the Lord deal graciously with you, and touch your young heart, as I pray he may, with a desire to be forgiven, and to be made a child of God, perhaps you will not take ill what I have written to you in much haste. As this is the first time you have been away from home, perhaps you have not learned to write letters yet; but if you have, I would like to hear from you, how you come on—what convictions you feel, if you feel any—what difficulties—what parts of the Bible puzzle you; and then I would do my best to unravel them. You read your Bible regularly, of course; but do try and understand it, and still more, to feel it. Read more parts than one at a time. For example, if you are reading Genesis, read a Psalm also; or, if you are reading Matthew, read a small bit of an epistle also. Turn the Bible into prayer. Thus, if you were reading the 1st Psalm, spread the Bible on the chair before you, and kneel and pray, "O Lord, give me the blessedness of the man," &c. "Let me not stand in the counsel of the ungodly," &c. This is the best way of knowing the meaning of the Bible, and of learning to pray. In prayer confess your sins by name—going over those of the past day one by one. Pray for your friends by name—father, mother, &c. &c. If you love them, surely you will pray for their souls. I know well that there are prayers constantly ascending for you from your own house; and will you not pray for them back again? Do this regularly. If you pray sincerely for others, it will make you pray for yourself. But I must be done. Good bye, dear G. Remember me to your brother kindly, and believe me your sincere friend,

R. M. M.

It is the shepherd’s duty (Ezekiel 34:4), in visiting his flock, to discriminate; "strengthening the diseased, healing that which was sick, binding up that which was broken, bringing again that which was driven away, seeking that which was lost." This Mr. M’Cheyne tried to do. In an afterletter to Mr. Somerville, of Anderston, in reference to the people of these parishes, whom he had had means of knowing, he wrote, "Take more heed to the saints than ever I did. Speak a word in season to S. M. S. H. will drink in simple truth, but tell him to be humble-minded. Cause L. H, to learn in silence; speak not of religion to her, but speak to her case always. Teach A. M. to look simply at Jesus. J. A. warn and teach. Get worldliness from the B.’s, if you can. Mrs. G. awake, or keep awake. Speak faithfully to the B.’s. Tell me of M. C., if she is really a believer, and grows. A. K., has the light visited her? M. T. I have had some doubts of. M. G. lies sore upon my conscience; I did no good to that woman; she always managed to speak of things about the truth. Speak boldly. What matter in eternity the slight awkwardness of time!"

It was about this time that the managers and congregation of the new church, St Peter’s, Dundee, invited him to preach as one of the candidates; and, in the end of August, chose him to be their pastor, with one accord. He accepted the call under an awful sense of the work that lay before him. He would rather, he said, have made choice for himself of such a rural parish as Dunipace ; but the Lord seemed to desire it otherwise. "His ways are in the sea." More than once, at a later period, he would say, "We might have thought that God would have sent a strong man to such a parish as mine, and not a feeble reed." The first day he preached in St Peter’s as a candidate (August 14th), is thus recorded: "Forenoon—Mind not altogether in a preaching frame; on the Sower. Afternoon—With more encouragement and help of the Spirit; on the Voice of the Beloved, in Song of Solomon 2:8-17.[2] In the Evening—With all my heart; on Ruth. Lord, keep me humble." Returning from St. Peter’s, the second time, he observed in his class of girls at Dunipace more

than usual anxiety. One of them seemed to be thoroughly awakened that evening. "Thanks be to thee, Lord, for anything," he writes that evening; for as yet he had sown without seeing fruit. It seems to have been part of the Lord's dealing with him, thus to teach him to persevere in duty and in faith, even where there was no obvious success. The arrow that was yet to wound hundreds was then receiving its point; but it lay in the quiver for a time. The Lord seemed to be touching his own heart and melting it by what he spoke to others, rather than touching or melting the hearts of those he spoke to. But from the day of his preaching in St Peter's, tokens of success began. His first day there, especially the evening sermon on Ruth, was blessed to two souls in Dundee; and now he sees souls begin to melt under his last words in the parish where he thought he had hitherto spent his strength in vain. As he was now to leave this sphere, he sought out with deep anxiety a laborer who would help their overburdened pastor, in true love to the people's souls. He believed he had found such a laborer in Mr. Somerville, his friend who had shared his every thought and feeling in former days, and who, with a sharp sickle in his hand, was now advancing toward the harvest field. "I see plainly," he wrote to Mr. Bonar, "that my poor attempts at labour in your dear parish will soon be eclipsed. But if at length the iron front of unbelief give way, if the hard faces become furrowed with the tears of anxiety and of faith, under whatever ministry, you will rejoice, and I will rejoice, and the angels, and the Father and God of angels, will rejoice." It was in this spirit that he closed his short ten months of labour in this region. His last sermons to the people of Larbert and Dunipace were on Hosea 14:1, "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God;" and Jeremiah 8:20, "Harvest is past." In the evening he writes, "Lord, I feel bowed down because of the little I have done for them which thou mightest have blessed! My bowels yearn over them, and all the more that I have done so little. Indeed I might have done ten times as much as I have done. I might have been in every house; I might have spoken always as a minister. Lord, canst thou bless partial, unequal efforts?"

I believe it was about this time that some of us first of all began our custom of praying specially for each other on Saturday evening, with a reference to our engagements in the ministry next day. This concert for prayer we have never since seen cause to discontinue. It has from time to time been widened in its circle; and as yet his has been the only voice that has been silenced of all that thus began to go in on each other's behalf before the Lord. Mr. M'Cheyne never failed to remember this time of prayer. "Larbert and Dunipace are always on my heart, especially on the Saturday evenings, when I pray for a glorious Sabbath!" On one occasion, in Dundee, he was asked if the accumulation of business in his parish never led him to neglect the season of prayer on a busy Saturday. His reply was, that he was not aware that it ever did. "What would my people do if I were not to pray?" So steady was he in Sabbath preparations, from the first day to the last time he was with them, that though at prayer meetings, or similar occasions, he did not think it needful to have much laid up before coming to address his people, yet, anxious to give them on the Sabbath what had cost him somewhat, he never, without an urgent reason, went before them without much previous meditation and prayer. His principle on this subject was embodied in a remark he made to some of us who were conversing on the matter. Being asked his view of diligent preparation for the pulpit, he reminded us of Exodus 27:20. "Beaten oil—beaten oil for the lamps of the sanctuary." And yet his prayerfulness was greater still. Indeed, he could not neglect fellowship with God before entering the congregation. He needed to be bathed in the love of God. His ministry was so much a bringing out of views that had first sanctified his own soul, that the healthiness of his soul was absolutely needful to the vigor and power of his ministrations.

During these ten months the Lord had done much for him, but it was chiefly in the way of discipline for a future ministry. He had been taught a minister's heart; he had been tried in the furnace; he had tasted deep personal sorrow, little of which has been recorded; he had felt the fiery darts of temptation; he had been exercised in self-examination and in much prayer; he had proved how flinty is the rock, and had learnt that in lifting the rod by which it was to be smitten, success lay in Him alone who enabled him to lift it up. And thus prepared of God for the peculiar work that awaited him, he turned his face towards Dundee, and took up his abode in the spot where the Lord was so marvelously to visit him in his ministry.

ENDNOTES:

[1] He here refers to the "Full and Candid Acknowledgment of Sin," for Students and Ministers, drawn up by the Commission of Assembly, 1651, and often reprinted since.

[2] See this characteristic sermon in the Remains.

04.03. First Years of Labour in Dundee

CHAPTER III FIRST YEARS OF LABOUR IN DUNDEE

"Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations."

Acts 20:18-19 The day on which he was ordained pastor of a flock was a day of much anxiety to his soul. He had journeyed by Perth to spend the night preceding under the roof of his kind friend Mr. Grierson, in the manse of Errol. Next morning, ere he left the manse, three passages of Scripture occupied his mind. 1. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose, mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee." Isaiah 26:3. This verse was seasonable; for, as he sat meditating on the solemn duties of the day, his heart trembled. 2. "Give thyself wholly to these things." 1 Timothy 4:15. May that word (he prayed) sink deep into my heart. 3. "Here am I, send me." Isaiah 6:8. "To go, or to stay—to be here till death, or to visit foreign shores—whatsoever, wheresoever, whensoever thou pleasest." He rose from his knees with the prayer, "Lord, may thy grace come with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery."

He was ordained on November 24, 1836. The service was conducted by Mr. Roxburgh of St. John’s, through whose exertions the new church had been erected, and who ever afterwards cherished the most cordial friendship towards him. On the Sabbath following, he was introduced to his flock by Mr. John Bonar of Larbert, with whom he had laboured as a son in the Gospel. Himself preached in the afternoon upon Isaiah 61:1-3, "The Spirit o f the Lord is upon me," &c.—of which he writes, "May it be prophetic of the object of my coming here!" And truly it was so. That very sermon—the first preached by him as a pastor-was the means of awakening souls, as he afterwards learnt; and ever onward the impressions left by his words seemed to spread and deepen among his people. To keep up the remembrance of this solemn day, he used in all the subsequent years of his ministry to preach from this same text on the anniversary of his ordination.[1] In the evening of that day, Mr. Bonar again preached on "These times o f refreshing." "A noble sermon, showing the marks of such times. AM when shall we have them here? Lord bless this word, to help their coming! Put thy blessing upon this day! Felt given over to God, as one bought with a price."

There was a rapid growth in his soul, perceptible to all who knew him well, from this time. Even his pulpit preparations, he used to say, became easier from this date. He had earnestly sought that the day of his ordination might be a time of new grace; he expected it would be so; and there was a peculiar work to be done by his hands, for which the Holy Spirit did speedily prepare him. His diary does not contain much of his feelings during his residence in Dundee. His incessant labours left him little time, except what he scrupulously spent in the direct exercises of devotion. But what we have seen of his manner of study and self-examination at Larbert, is sufficient to show in what a constant state of cultivation his soul was kept; and his habits in these respects continued with him to the last. Jeremy Taylor recommends— "If thou meanest to enlarge thy religion, do it rather by enlarging thine ordinary devotions than thy extraordinary." This advice describes very

accurately the plan of spiritual life on which Mr. M’Cheyne acted. He did occasionally set apart seasons for special prayer and fasting, occupying the time so set apart exclusively in devotion: But the real secret of his soul’s prosperity lay in the daily enlargement of his heart in fellowship with his God. And the river deepened as it flowed on to eternity; so that he at least reached that feature of a holy pastor which Paul pointed out to Timothy (1 Timothy 4:15)— "His profiting did appear to all." In his own house everything was fitted to make you feel that the service of God was a cheerful service, while he sought that every arrangement of the family should bear upon eternity. His morning hours were set apart for the nourishment of his own soul; not, however, with the view of laying up a stock of grace for the rest of the day—for manna will corrupt if laid by—but rather with the view of "giving the eye the habit of looking upward all the day, and drawing down gleams from the reconciled countenance." He was sparing in the hours devoted to sleep, and resolutely secured time for devotion before breakfast, although often wearied and exhausted when he laid himself to rest. "A soldier of the cross," was his remark, "must endure hardness." Often he sang a Psalm of praise, as soon as he arose, to stir up his soul. Three chapters of the Word was his usual morning portion. This he thought little enough, for he delighted exceedingly in the Scriptures: they were better to him than thousands of gold or silver. "When you write," said he to a friend, "tell me the meaning of Scriptures." To another, in expressing his value for the Word, he said, "One gem from that ocean is worth all the pebbles of earthly streams." His chief season of relaxation seemed to be breakfast-time. He would come down with a happy countenance and a full soul; and after the sweet season of family prayer, forthwith commence forming plans for the day. When he was well, nothing seemed to afford him such true delight as to have his hands full of work. Indeed, it was often remarked that in him you found—what you rarely meet with- a man of high poetic imagination and deep devotion, who nevertheless was engaged unceasingly in the busiest and most laborious activities of his office. His friends could observe how much his soul was engrossed during his times of study and devotion. If interrupted on such occasions, though he never seemed ruffled, yet there was a kind of gravity and silence that implied— "I wish to be alone." But he further aimed at enjoying God all the day. And referring on one occasion to those blank hours which so often are a believer’s burden—hours during which the soul is dry and barren—he observed, "They are proofs of how little we are filled with the presence of God, how little we are branch-like[2] in our faith." This careful attention to the frame of his spirit did not hinder his preparation for his people: on the contrary, it kept alive his deep conscientiousness, and kept his warm compassion ever yearning. When asked to observe a Saturday as a day of fasting and prayer, along with some others who had a special object in view, he replied— "Saturday is an awkward day for ministers; for though I love to seek help from on High, I love also diligently to set my thoughts in order for the Sabbath. I sometimes fear that you fail in this latter duty."

During his first years in Dundee, he often rode out in an afternoon to the ruined church of Invergowrie, to enjoy an hour’s perfect solitude; for he felt meditation and prayer to be the very sinews of his work. Such notices, also, as the following shew his systematic pursuit of personal holiness:

"April 9, 1837—Evening.—A very pleasant quietness. Study of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Came to a more intelligent view of the first six chapters than ever before. Much refreshed by John Newton; instructed by Edwards. Help and freedom in prayer. Lord, what a happy season is a Sabbath evening! What will Heaven be!"

"April 16.—Sabbath Evening.—Much prayer and peace. Reading the Bible only."

"June 2.—Much peace and rest to-night. Much broken under a sense of my exceeding wickedness, which no eye can see but thine. Much persuasion of the sufficiency of Christ, and of the constancy of his love. O how sweet to work all day for God, and then to lie down at night under his smiles."

"June 17, 1838.—At Dumbarney communion. Much sin and coldness two days before. Lay low at his feet; found peace only in Jesus."

"September 25.—Spent last week at Blairgowrie; I hope not in vain. Much sin, weakness, and uselessness; much delight in the Word also, while opening it up at family prayer. May God make the Word fire. Opened 1 Thessalonians, the whole; enriching to my own mind. How true is Psalms 1:1-6; yet observed in my heart a strange proneness to be entangled with the affairs of this life; not strange because I am good, but because I have been so often taught that bitterness is the end of it."

"Sept. 28.—Devoted chief part of Friday to fasting. Humbled and refreshed."

"Sept. 30—Sabbath.—Very happy in my work. Too little prayer in the morning. Must try to get early to bed on Saturday, that I may ‘rise a great while before day.’" These early hours of prayer on Sabbath he endeavored to have all his life; not for study, but for prayer. He never laboured at his sermons on a Sabbath. That day he kept for its original end, the refreshment o f his soul. (Exodus 31:17.) The parish of St Peter’s, to which he had come, was large and very destitute. It is situated at the west end of the town, and included some part of the adjacent country. The church was built in connection with the Church Extension Scheme. The parish was a quoad sacra parish, detached from St. John’s. It contains a population of 4000 souls, very many of whom never crossed the threshold of any sanctuary. His congregation amounted, at the very outset, to about 1100 hearers, one-third of whom came from distant parts of the town.

Here was a wide field for parochial labour. It was also a very dead region—few, even of those who were living Christians, breathed their life on others; for the surrounding mass of impenetrable heathenism had cast its sad influence even over them. His first impressions of Dundee were severe. "A city given to idolatry and hardness of heart. I fear there is much of what Isaiah speaks of, ‘The prophets prophesy lies, and the people love to have it so.’" His first months of labour were very trying. He was not strong in bodily health, and that winter a fatal influenza prevailed for two or three months, so that most of his time in his parish was spent in visiting the sick and dying. In such cases he was always ready. "Did I tell you of the boy I was asked to see on Sabbath evening, just when I had got myself comfortably seated at home? I went and was speaking to him of the freeness and fullness of Jesus, when he gasped a little and died." In one of his first visits to the sick, the narrative of the Lord’s singular dealings with one of his parishioners greatly encouraged him to carry the glad tidings to the distressed under every disadvantage. Four years before, a young woman had been seized with cholera, and was deprived of the use of speech for a whole year. The Bible was read to her, and men of God used to speak and pray with her. At the end of the year her tongue was loosed, and the first words heard from her lips were praise and thanksgiving for what the Lord had done for her soul. It was in her chamber he was now standing, hearing from her own lips what the Lord had wrought. On another occasion, during the first year of

his ministry, he witnessed the death-bed conversion of a man who, till within a few days of his end, almost denied that there was a God. This solid conversion, as he believed it to be, stirred him up to speak with all hopefulness, as well as earnestness, to the dying. But it was, above all, to the children of God that his visitations seemed blessed. His voice, and his very eye, spoke tenderness; for personal affliction had taught him to feel sympathy with the sorrowing. Though the following be an extract from a letter, yet it will be recognized by many as exhibiting his mode of dealing with God's afflicted ones in his visitations: "There is a sweet word in Exodus (Exodus 3:7), which was pointed out to me the other day by a poor bereaved child of God—'I know their sorrows.' Study that; it fills the soul. Another word like it is in Psalms 103:14—'He knoweth our frame.' May your own soul, and that of your dear friends, be fed by these things. A dark hour makes Jesus bright. Another sweet word—'They knew not that it was Jesus.'"

I find some specimens of his sick visits among his papers, noted down at a time when his work had not grown upon his hands. "January 25, 1837—Visited Mgt. M'Bain, a young woman of twenty-four, long ill of decline. Better or worse these ten years past. Spoke of 'The one thing needful', plainly. She sat quiet. February 14th—Had heard she was better—found her near dying. Spoke plainly and tenderly to her, commending Christ. Used many texts. She put out her hand kindly on leaving. 15th.—Still dying-like; spoke as yesterday. She never opened her eyes. 16th—Shewed her the dreadfulness of wrath; freeness of Christ; the majesty, justice, truth of God. Poor M. is fast going the way whence she shall not return. Many neighbors also always gather in. 17th—Read Psalms 22:1-31; shewed the sufferings of Christ; how sufficient an atonement; how feeling a high priest. She breathed loud, and groaned through pain. Died this evening at seven. I hardly ever heard her speak anything; and I will hope that thou art with Christ in glory, till I go and see. 20th—Prayed at her funeral. Saw her laid in St Peter's churchyard, the first laid there, by her own desire, in the fresh mould where never man was laid. May it be a token that she is with Him who was laid in a new tomb."

He records another case: "January 4, 1837—Sent for to Mrs. S——. Very ill; asthmatic. Spoke on 'No condemnation to them that are in Christ.' She said, 'But am I in Christ?' seemingly very anxious. Said she had often been so, and had let it go by. 5th—Still living; spoke to her of Christ, and of full salvation. (Myself confined in the house till the 16th.) 16th—Much worse. Not anxious to hear, yet far from rest. Dark, uneasy eye. Asked me, 'What is it to believe?' Spoke to her on 'God, who made light shine out of darkness.' She seemed to take up nothing. Lord help! 17th—Still worse; wearing away. No smile; no sign of inward peace. Spoke of 'Remember me.' Went over the whole gospel in the form of personal address. She drowsy. 18th—Quieter. 'My Lord and my God.' She spoke at intervals. More cheerful; anxious that I should not go without prayer. Has much knowledge; complete command of the Bible. 19th—Spoke on 'Convincing of sin and righteousness.' Rather more heart to hear. 20th—Psalms 50:1-23. Her look and her words were lightsome. 23rd—Faintish and restless; no sign of peace. 'I am the way,' and Psalms 25:24th—Still silent and little sign of anything. 26th—Psalms 40:1-17. 'The fearful pit'' Very plain. Could not get anything out of her. February 1st—Died at twelve noon; no visible mark of light, or comfort, or hope. The day shall declare it."

One other case: "February 5, 1839.—Called suddenly in the evening. Found him near death. Careless family. Many round him. Spoke of the freeness and sufficiency of Jesus, 'Come unto me,' &c., and 'The wrath o f God revealed from heaven.' Told him he was going where he would see

Christ; asked him if he would be his Saviour? He seemed to answer; his father said, ‘He is saying, yes.’ But it was the throe of death. One or two indescribable gasps, and he died! I sat silent, and let God preach. 7th—Spoke of the ‘Widow of Nain,’ and ‘Behold, I stand at the door.’"

Attendance at funerals was often to him a season of much exercise. Should it not be to all ministers a time for solemn inquiry? Was I faithful with this soul? Could this soul have learnt salvation from me every time I saw him? And did I pray as fervently as I spoke? And if we have tender pity for souls, we will sometimes feel as Mr. M’Cheyne records: "September 44.—"Buried A, M. Felt bitterly the word, ‘If any man draw back,’ &c. Never had more bitter feelings at any funeral."

All who make any pretension to the office of shepherds visit their flocks;[3] yet there is a wide difference in the kind of visits which shepherds give. One does it formally, to discharge his duty and to quiet conscience; another makes it his delight. And of those who make it their delight, one goes forth on the regular plan of addressing all in somewhat of the same style; while another speaks freely, according as the wounds of his sheep come to view. On all occasions, this difficult and trying work must be gone about with a full heart, if it is to be gone about successfully at all. There is little in it to excite, for there is not the presence of numbers, and the few you see at a time are in their calmest, every-day mood. Hence there is need of being full of grace, and need of feeling as though God did visit every hearer by your means. Our object is not to get duty done, but to get souls saved (2 Corinthians 13:7). Mr. M’Cheyne used to go forth in this spirit; and often after visiting from house to house for several hours, he would return to some room in the place in the evening, and preach to the gathered families. "September 26, 1838.—Good visiting-day. Twelve families; many of them go nowhere. It is a great thing to be well furnished by meditation and prayer before setting out; it makes you a far more full and faithful witness. Preached in A. F.’s house on job, ‘I know that my Redeemer liveth.’ Very sweet and precious to myself."

Partly from his state of health, and partly from the vast accumulation of other labours, and the calls made on him for evangelizing elsewhere, he was never able to overtake the visitation of the whole district assigned him. He was blessed to attract and reclaim very many of the most degraded; and by Sabbath-schools, and a regular eldership, to take superintendence of the population, to a great extent. Still he himself often said that his parish had never fully shared in the advantages that attend an aggressive system of parochial labour. Once, when spending a day in the rural parish of Collace, as we went in the afternoon from door to door, and spoke to the children whom we met on the road-side, he smiled and said, "Well, how I envy a country minister; for he can get acquainted with his people, and have some insight into their real character." Many of us thought that he afterwards erred, in the abundant frequency of his evangelistic labours at a time when he was still bound to a particular flock.

He had an evening-class every week for the young people of his congregation. The Catechism and the Bible were his text books, while he freely introduced all manner of useful illustrations. He thought himself bound to prepare diligently for his classes, that he might give accurate and simple explanations, and unite what was interesting with the most solemn and awakening views. But it was his class for young communicants that engaged his deepest care, and wherein he saw most success. He began a class of this kind previous to his first Communion, and continued to form it again some weeks before every similar occasion. His tract, published in 1840 "This do in remembrance of me," may be considered as exhibiting the substance of his solemn examinations

on these occasions.

He usually noted down his first impressions of his communicants, and compared these notes with what he afterwards saw in them. Thus: "M. K., sprightly and lightsome, yet sensible; she saw plainly that the converted alone should come to the Table, but stumbled at the question, If she were converted? Yet she claimed being awakened and brought to Christ." Another: "Very staid, intelligent-like person, with a steady kind of anxiety, but, I fear, no feeling of helplessness. Thought that sorrow and prayer would obtain forgiveness. Told her plainly what I thought of her case." Another: "Knows she was once Christless; now she reads and prays, and is anxious. I doubt not there is some anxiety, yet I fear it may be only a self-reformation to recommend herself to God and to man. Told her plainly." "A. M., I fear much for him. Gave him a token with much anxiety; warned him very much." "C. P. does not seem to have any work of anxiety. He reads prayer-books, &c. Does not pray in secret. Seems not very intelligent."

He sought to encourage Sabbath-schools in all the districts of his parish. The hymn, "Oil for the Lamp," was written to impress the parable on a class of Sabbath scholars in1841. Some of his sweet, simple tracts were written for these schools. "Reasons why Children should fly to Christ" was the first, written at the New Year, 1839; and "The Lambs o f the Flock" was another at a later period. His heart felt for the young. One evening, after visiting some of his Sabbathschools, he writes: "Had considerable joy in teaching the children. O for real heart-work among them! " He could accommodate himself to their capacities; and he did not reckon it vain to use his talents in order to attract their attention ; for he regarded the soul of a child as infinitely precious. Ever watchful for opportunities, on the blank leaf of a book which he had sent to a little boy of his congregation, he wrote these simple lines:—

Peace be to thee, gentle boy!

Many years of health and joy!

Love your Bible more than play—

Grow in wisdom every day.

Like the lark on hovering wing, Early rise, and mount and sing;

Like the dove that found no rest Till it flew to Noah’s breast, Rest not in this world of sin, Till the Saviour take thee in.

He had a high standard in his mind as to the moral qualifications of those who should teach the young. When a female teacher was sought for to conduct an evening school in his parish for the sake of the mill-girls, he wrote to one interested in the cause—"The qualifications she should possess for sewing and knitting, you will understand far better than I. She should be able to keep up in her scholars the fluency of reading, and the knowledge of the Bible and Catechism, which they may have already acquired. She should be able to teach them to sing the praises of God, with feeling and melody. But, far above all, she should be a Christian woman, not in name only, but in deed and in truth—one whose heart has been touched by the Spirit of God, and who can love the souls of little children. Any teacher who wanted this last qualification, I would look upon as a curse rather than a blessing—a centre of blasting, and coldness, and death, instead of a centre from which life, and warmth, and heavenly influence might emanate."

It was very soon after his ordination that he began his weekly prayer-meeting in the church. He had heard how meetings of this kind had been blessed in other places, and never had he any cause to regret having set apart the Thursday evening for this holy purpose. One of its first effects was to quicken those who had already believed; they were often refreshed upon these occasions even more than on the Sabbath. Some of the most solemn seasons of his ministry were at those meetings. At their commencement, he wrote to me an account of his manner of conducting them—"I give my people a Scripture to be hidden in the heart—generally a promise of the Spirit or the wonderful effects of his out pouring.[4] I give them the heads of a sermon upon it for about twenty minutes. Prayer goes before and follows. Then I read some history of Revivals, and comment in passing. I think the people are very much interested in it: a number of people come from all parts of the town. But, oh! I need much the living Spirit to my own soul; I want my life to be hid with Christ in God. At present there is too much hurry, and bustle and outward working, to allow the calm working of the Spirit on the heart. I seldom get time to meditate, like Isaac, at evening-tide, except when I am tired; but the dew comes down when all nature is at rest—when every leaf is still." A specimen of the happy freedom and familiar illustrations which his people felt to be peculiar to these meetings, may be found in the notes taken by one of his hearers, of "Expositions o f the Epistles to the Seven Churches," given during the year 1838. He had himself great delight in the Thursday evening meetings. "They will doubtless be remembered in eternity with songs of praise," said he, on one occasion; and at another time, observing the tender frame of a soul which was often manifested at these seasons, he said, "There is a stillness to the last word-not as on Sabbaths, a rushing down at the end of the prayer, as if glad to get out of God's presence." So many believing and so many enquiring souls used to attend, and so few of the worldlings, that you seemed to breathe the atmosphere of heaven. But it was his Sabbath-day's services that brought multitudes together, and were soon felt throughout the town. He was ever so ready to assist his brethren, so much engaged in every good work, and latterly so often interrupted by inquiries, that it might be thought he had no time for careful preparation, and might be excused for the absence of it. But, in truth, he never preached without careful attention bestowed on his subject. He might, indeed, have little time—often the hours of a Saturday was all the time he could obtain—but his daily study of the Scriptures stored his mind, and formed a continual preparation. Much of his Sabbath services was a drawing out of what he had carried in during busy days of the week. His voice was remarkably clear—his manner attractive by its mild dignity. His form itself drew the eye.[5] He spoke from the pulpit as one earnestly occupied with the souls before him. He made them feel sympathy with what he spoke, for his own eye and heart were on them. He was, at the same time, able to bring out illustrations at once simple and felicitous, often with poetic skill and elegance. He wished to use Saxon words, for the sake of being understood by the most illiterate in his audience. And while his style was singularly clear, this clearness itself was so much the consequence of his being able thoroughly to analyze and explain his subject, that all his hearers alike reaped the benefit.

He went about his public work with awful reverence. So evident was this, that I remember a countryman in my parish observed to me—"Before he opened his lips, as he came along the passage, there was something about him that sorely affected me." In the vestry there was never any idle conversation; all was preparation of heart in approaching God; and a short prayer preceded his entering the pulpit. Surely in going forth to speak for God, a man may well be overawed ! Surely in putting forth his hand to sow the seed of the kingdom, a man may even

tremble! And surely we should aim at nothing less than to pour forth the truth upon our people through the channel of our own living and deeply affected souls.

After announcing the subject of his discourse, he used generally to show the position it occupied in the context, and then proceed to bring out the doctrines of the text in the manner of our old divines. This done, he divided his subject; and herein he was eminently skilful. "The heads of his sermons," said a friend, "were not the mile stones that tell you how near you are to your journey's end, but they were nails which fixed and fastened all he said. Divisions are often dry; but not so his divisions—they were so textual and so feeling, and they brought out the spirit of a passage so surprisingly."

It was his wish to arrive nearer at the primitive mode of expounding Scripture in his sermons. Hence when one asked him if he was never afraid of running short of sermons some day, he replied—"No; I am just an interpreter of Scripture in my sermons; and when the Bible runs dry, then I shall." And in the same spirit he carefully avoided the too common mode of accommodating texts—fastening a doctrine on the words, not drawing it from the obvious connection of the passage. He endeavored at all times to preach the mind o f the Spirit in a passage; for he feared that to do otherwise would be to grieve the Spirit who had written it. Interpretation was thus a solemn matter to him. And yet, adhering scrupulously to this sure principle, he felt himself in no way restrained from using, for every day's necessities, all parts of the Old Testament as much as the New. His manner was first to ascertain the primary sense and application, and so proceed to handle it for present use. Thus, on Isaiah 26:16-19, he began—"This passage, I believe, refers literally to the conversion of God's ancient people." He regarded the prophecies as history yet to be, and drew lessons from them accordingly as he would have done from the past. Every spiritual gift being in the hands of Jesus, if he found Moses or Paul in the possession of precious things, he forthwith was led to follow them into the presence of that same Lord who gave them all their grace.

There is a wide difference between preaching doctrine and preaching Christ. Mr. M'Cheyne preached all the doctrines of Scripture as understood by our Confession of Faith, dwelling upon ruin by the Fall, and recovery by the Mediator. "The things of the human heart, and the things of the Divine mind," were in substance his constant theme. From personal experience of deep temptation, he could lay open the secrets of the heart, so that he once said, "He supposed the reason why some of the worst sinners in Dundee had come to hear him was, because his heart exhibited so much likeness to theirs:" Still it was not doctrine alone that he preached; it was Christ, from whom all doctrine shoots forth as rays from a centre. He sought to hang every vessel and flagon upon him. "It is strange," he wrote after preaching on Revelation 1:15—"It is strange how sweet and precious it is to preach directly about Christ, compared with all other subjects of preaching." And he often expressed a dislike of the phrase, "giving attention to religion," because it seemed to substitute doctrine, and a devout way of thinking, for Christ himself.

It is difficult to convey to those who never knew him a correct idea of the sweetness and holy unction of his preaching. Some of his sermons, printed from his own MSS. (although almost all are first copies), may convey a correct idea of his style and mode of preaching doctrine. But there are no notes that give any true idea of his affectionate appeals to the heart and searching applications. These he seldom wrote; they were poured forth at the moment when his heart filled with his subject; for his rule was to set before his hearers a body of truth first and there always was a vast

amount of Bible truth in his discourses-and then urge home the application. His exhortations flowed from his doctrine, and thus had both variety and power. He was systematic in this; for he observed—"Appeals to the careless, &c., come with power on the back of some massy truth. See how Paul does (Acts 13:40), ‘Beware, therefore, lest,’ &c., and (Hebrews 2:1), ‘Therefore, we should,’ &c."

He was sometimes a little unguarded in his statements, when his heart was deeply moved and his feelings stirred, and sometimes he was too long in his addresses; but this also arose from the fullness of his soul. "Another word," he thought, "may be blessed, though the last has made no impression."

Many will remember for ever the blessed Communion Sabbaths that were enjoyed in St Peter’s. From the very first these Communion seasons were remarkably owned of God. The awe of his presence used to be upon his people, and the house filled with the odour of the ointment, when his name was poured forth. (Song of Solomon 1:3.) But on common Sabbaths also many soon began to journey long distances to attend St Peter’s—many from country parishes, who would return home with their hearts burning, as they talked of what they had heard that day.

Mr. M’Cheyne knew the snare of popularity, and naturally was one that would have been fascinated by it; but the Lord kept him. He was sometimes extraordinarily helped in his preaching, but at other times, though not perceived by his hearers, his soul felt as if left to its own resources. The cry of Rowland Hill was constantly on his lips, "Master, help!" and often is it written at the close of his sermon. Much affliction, also, was a thorn in the flesh to him. He described himself as often "strong as a giant when in the Church, but like a willow-wand when all was over." But certainly, above all, his abiding sense of the Divine favour was his safeguard. He began his ministry in Dundee with this sunshine on his way. "As yet I have been kept not only in the light of his reconciled countenance, but very much under the guiding eye of our providing God. Indeed, as I remember good old Swartz used to say, ‘I could not have imagined that he could have been so gracious to us.’" I believe that while he had some sorer conflicts, he had also far deeper joy after his return from Palestine than in the early part of his ministry, though from the very commencement of it, he enjoyed that sense of love of God which "keeps the heart and mind." (Php 4:7). This was the true secret of his holy walk, and of his calm humility. But for this, his ambition would have become the only principle of many an action; but now the sweeter peace of God constrained him, and the natural ambition of his spirit could be discerned only as suggesting to him the idea of making attempts which others would have declined.

What monotony there is in the ministry of many! Duty presses on the heels of duty in an endless circle. But it is not so when the Spirit is quickening both the pastor and his flock. Then there is all the variety of life. It was so here. The Lord began to work by his means almost from the first day he came. There was ever one and another stricken, and going apart to weep alone. The flocking of souls to his ministry, and the deep interest excited, drew the attention of many, and raised the wish in some quarters to have him as their pastor. He had not been many months engaged in his laborious work when he was solicited to remove to the parish of Skirling, near Biggar. It was an offer that presented great advantages above his own field of labour as to worldly gain, and in respect of the prospect it held out of comparative ease and comfort; for the parish was small and the emolument great. But as it is required of a bishop, that he be "not greedy of filthy lucre"; nay,

that he be "one who has no love of money" (■φιλαργυρος, 1 Timothy 3:3) at all, so was it true that in him these qualifications eminently shone. His remarks in a letter to his father contain the honest expression of his feelings:—"I am set down among nearly 4000 people; 1100 people have taken seats in my church. I bring my message, such as it is, within the reach of that great company every Sabbath-day. I dare not leave this people. I dare not leave 3000 or 4000, for 300 people. Had this been offered me before, I would have seen it a direct intimation from God, and would heartily have embraced it. How T should have delighted to feed so precious a little flock-to watch over every family—to know every heart—'to allure to brighter worlds and lead the way!' But God has not so ordered it. He has set me down among the noisy mechanics and political weavers of this godless town. He will make the money sufficient. He that paid his taxes from a fish's mouth, will supply all my need." He had already expressed the hope, "Perhaps the Lord will make this wilderness of chimney-tops to be green and beautiful as the garden of "the Lord, a field which the Lord hath blessed." His health was delicate; and the harassing care and endless fatigue incident to his position, in a town like Dundee, seemed unsuitable to his spirit. This belief led to another attempt to remove him to a country sphere. In the summer of this same year (1837) he was strongly urged to preach as a candidate for the vacant parish of St Martin's, near Perth, and assured of the appointment if he would only come forward. But he declined again: "My Master has placed me here with his own hand; and I never will, directly or indirectly, seek to be removed."

There were circumstances in this latter case that made the call on him appear urgent in several points of view. In coming to a resolution, he mentions one interesting element in the decision, in a letter to me, dated August 8th. "I was much troubled about being asked to go to a neighboring parish at present vacant, and made it a matter of prayer; and I mention it now because of the wonderful answer to prayer which I think I received from God. I prayed that in order to settle my own mind completely about staying, he would awaken some of my people. I agreed that that should be a sign he would wish me to stay. The next morning, I think, or at least the second morning, there came to me two young persons I had never seen before, in great distress. What brought this to my mind was, that they came to me again yesterday, and their distress is greatly increased. Indeed I never saw any people in such anguish about their soul. I cannot but regard this as a real answer to prayer. I have also several other persons in deep distress, and I feel that I am quite helpless in comforting them. I would fain be like Noah, who put out his hand and took in the weary dove; but God makes me stand by and feel that I am a child. Will God never cast the scenes of our labour near each other? We are in his hand; let him do as seemeth him good. Pray for me, for my people, for my own soul, that I be not a castaway."

Few godly pastors can be willing to change the scene of their labours, unless it be plain that the Cloudy Pillar is pointing them away. It is perilous for men to choose for themselves; and too often has it happened that the minister who, on slight grounds, moved away from his former watchtower, has had reason to mourn over the disappointment of his hopes in his larger and wider sphere. But while this is admitted, probably it may appear unwarrantable in Mr. M'Cheyne to have prayed for a sign of the Lord's will. It is to be observed, however, that he decided the point of duty on other grounds, and it was only with the view of obtaining an additional confirmation by the occurrences of Providence, that he prayed in this manner, in submission to the will of the Lord. He never held it right to decide the path of duty by any such signs or tokens; he believed that the written word supplied sufficient data for guiding the believing soul; and such providential occurrences as

happened in this case he regarded as important only so far as they might be answers to prayer. Indeed, he himself has left us a glance of his views on this point in a fragment, which (for it is not dated) may have been written about this time. He had been thinking on "Gideon’s Fleece."

When God called Gideon forth to fight"—

Go, save thou Israel in thy might,"— The faithful warrior sought a sign That God would on his labours shine. The man who, at thy dread command, Lifted the shield and deadly brand, To do thy strange and fearful work Thy work of blood and vengeance, Lord!— Might need assurance doubly tried, To prove thou wouldst his steps betide. But when the message which we bring Is one to make the dumb man sing: To bid the blind man wash and see, The lame to leap with ecstasy; To raise the soul that’s bowed down, To wipe away the tears and frown; To sprinkle all the heart within From the accusing voice of sin—

Then, such a sign my call to prove, To preach my Savior’s dying love, I cannot, dare not, hope to find. In the close of the same year 1837, he agreed to become Secretary to the Association for Church Extension in the county of Forfar. The Church Extension scheme, though much misrepresented and much misunderstood, had in view as its genuine, sincere endeavor, to bring to overgrown parishes the advantage of a faithful minister, placed over such a number of souls as he could really visit. Mr. M’Cheyne cheerfully and diligently forwarded these objects to the utmost of his power. "It is the cause of God," said he, "and therefore I am willing to spend and be spent for it." It compelled him to ride much from place to place; but riding was an exercise of which he was fond, and which was favorable to his health. As a specimen—"Dec. 4th, 1838. Traveled to Montrose. Spoke, along with Mr. Guthrie, at a Church Extension meeting; eight or nine hundred present. Tried to do something in the Savior’s cause, both directly and indirectly. Next day at Forfar. Spoke in the same cause."

How heartily he entered into this scheme may be seen from the following extract. In a letter of an after date to Mr. Roxburgh, he says—"Every day I live, I feel more and more persuaded that it is the cause of God and of his kingdom in Scotland in our day. Many a time, when I thought myself a dying man, the souls of the perishing thousands in my own parish, who never enter any house of God, have lain heavy on my heart. Many a time have I prayed that the eyes of our enemies might be opened, and that God would open the hearts of our rulers, to feel that their highest duty and greatest glory is to support the ministers of Christ, and to send these to every perishing soul in Scotland." He felt that their misery was all the greater, and their need the deeper, that such neglected souls had no wish for help, and would never ask for it themselves. Nor was it that he imagined that, if churches were built and ministers endowed, this would of itself be sufficient to reclaim the multitudes of perishing men. But he sought and expected that the Lord would send faithful men into his vineyard. These new churches were to be like cisterns—ready to catch the shower when it should fall, just as his own did in the day of the Lord’s power. His views on this subject were summed up in the following lines, written one day as he sat in company with some of his zealous brethren who were deeply engaged in the scheme:—

"Give me a man of God the truth to preach, A house of prayer within convenient reach, Seat-rents the poorest of the poor can pay, A spot so small one pastor can survey, Give these-and give the Spirit’s genial shower, Scotland shall be a garden all in flower!"

Another public duty, to which during all the years of his ministry he gave constant attention, was attendance at the meetings of Presbytery. His candor, and uprightness, and Christian generosity, were felt by a11 his brethren; and his opinion, though the opinion of so young a man, was regarded with more than common respect. In regard to the great public questions that were then shaking the Church of Scotland, his views were decided and unhesitating. No policy, in his view, could be more ruinous to true Christianity, or more fitted to blight vital godliness, than that of Moderatism. He wrote once to a friend in Ireland—"You don't know what Moderatism is. It is a plant that our Heavenly Father never planted, and I trust it is now to be rooted up." The great question of the Church's independence of the Civil Power in all matters spiritual, and the right of the Christian people to judge if the pastor appointed over them had the Shepherd's voice, he invariably held to be part of Scripture truth; which, therefore, must be preached and carried into practice, at all hazards. In like manner he rejoiced exceedingly in the settlements of faithful ministers. The appointments of Mr. Baxter to Hilltown, Mr. Lewis to St David's, and Mr. Miller to Wallacetown at a later period, are all noticed by him with expressions of thankfulness and joy; and it occasioned the same feelings if he heard of the destitution of any parish in any part of the country supplied. He writes, September 20, 1838. "Present at A. B.'s ordination at Collace with great joy. Blessed be God for the gift of this pastor. Give testimony to the word of thy grace."

Busy at home, he nevertheless always had a keenly evangelistic spirit. He might have written much, and have gained a name by his writings; but he laid everything aside when put in comparison with preaching the everlasting gospel. He scarcely ever refused an invitation to preach on a week-day; and traveling from place to place did not interrupt his fellowship with God. His occasional visits during these years were much blessed. At Blairgowrie and Collace his visits were longed for as times of special refreshment; nor was it less so at Kirriemuir, when he visited Mr. Cormick, or at Abernyte in the days when Mr. Hamilton (now of Regent Square, London) and afterwards Mr. Manson, were laboring in that vineyard. It would be difficult even to enumerate the places which he watered at Communion seasons; and in some of these it was testified of him, that not the words he spoke, but the holy manner in which he spoke, was the chief means of arresting souls.

Occasionally two or three of us, whose lot was cast within convenient distance, and whose souls panted for the same water-brooks, used to meet together to spend a whole day in confession of ministerial and personal sins, with prayer for grace, guiding ourselves by the reading of the Word. At such times we used to meet in the evening with the flock of the pastor in whose house the meeting had been held through the day, and there unitedly pray for the Holy Spirit being poured down upon the people. The first time we held such a meeting, there were tokens of blessing observed by several of us; and the week after, he wrote—"Has there been any fruit of the happy day we spent with you? I thought I saw some the Sabbath after, here. In due season we shall reap if we faint not; only be thou strong, and of a good courage." The incident that encouraged him is recorded in his diary. An elderly person came to tell him how the river of joy and peace in believing had that Sabbath most singularly flowed through her soul, so that she blessed God that she ever came to St Peter's. He adds, "N.B.—This seems a fruit of our prayer-meeting, begun last Wednesday at Collace—one drop of the shower."

It should have been remarked ere now, that during all his ministry he was careful to use not only the direct means appointed for the conversion of souls, but those also that appear more indirect,

such as the key of discipline. In regard to the Lord’s Supper, his little tract explains his views. He believed that to keep back those whose profession was a credible profession, even while the pastor might have strong doubts as to their fitness in his own mind, was not the rule laid down for us in the New Testament. At the same time, he as steadily maintained that no unconverted person ought to come to the Lord’s Table; and on this point "they should judge themselves if they would not be judged." When communicants came to be admitted for the first time, or when parents that had been communicants before came for baptism to their children, it was his custom to ask them solemnly if their souls were saved. His dealing was blessed to the conversion of not a few young persons who were coming carelessly forward to the communion; and himself records the blessing that attended his faithful dealing with a parent coming to speak with him about the baptism of his child. The man said that he had been taking thought, and believed himself in the right way-that he felt his disposition better, for he could forgive injuries. Mr. M’Cheyne showed him that nevertheless he was ignorant of God’s righteousness. The man laid it to heart; and when Mr. M’Cheyne said that he thought it would be better to defer the baptism, at once offered to come again and speak on the matter. On a subsequent visit, he seemed really to have seen his error, and to have cast away his own righteousness. When his child was baptized, it was joy to the pastor’s heart to have the good hope that the man had received salvation. In connection with the superstitious feeling of the most depraved as to baptism, he related an affecting occurrence. A careless parent one evening entered his house, and asked him to come with him to baptize a dying child. He knew that neither this man nor his wife ever entered the door of a church; but he rose and went with him to the miserable dwelling. There an infant lay, apparently dying; and many of the female neighbors, equally depraved with the parents, stood round. He came forward to where the child was, and spoke to the parents of their ungodly state and fearful guilt before God, and concluded by showing them that, in such circumstances, he would consider it sinful in him to administer baptism to their infant. They said, "He might at least do it for the sake of the poor child." He told them that it was not baptism that saved a soul, and that out of true concern for themselves he must not do as they wished. The friends around the bed then joined the parents in upbraiding him as having no pity on the poor infant’s soul! He stood among them still, and showed them that it was they who had been thus cruel to their child; and then lifted up his voice in solemn warning, and left the house amid their ignorant reproaches. Nor did he make light of the Kirk-session’s power to rebuke and deal with an offender. Once from the pulpit, at an ordination of elders, he gave the following testimony upon this head:—"When I first entered upon the work of the ministry among you, I was exceedingly ignorant of the vast importance of church discipline. I thought that my great and almost only work was to pray and preach. I saw your souls to be so precious, and the time so short, that I devoted all my time, and care, and strength, to labour in word and doctrine. When cases of discipline were brought before me and the elders, I regarded them with something like abhorrence. It was a duty I shrank from; and I may truly say it nearly drove me from the work of the ministry among you altogether. But it pleased God, who teaches his servants in another way than man teaches, to bless some of the cases of discipline to the manifest and undeniable conversion of the souls of those under our care; and from that hour a new light broke in upon my mind, and I saw that if preaching be an ordinance of Christ, so is church discipline. I now feel very deeply persuaded that both are of God—that two keys are committed to us by Christ, the one the key of doctrine, by means of which we unlock the treasures of the Bible, the other the key of discipline, by which we open or shut the way to the sealing ordinances of the faith. Both are Christ’s gift, and

neither is to be resigned without sin."

There was still another means of enforcing what he preached, in the use of which he has excelled all his brethren, namely, the holy consistency of his daily walk. Aware that one idle word, one needless contention, one covetous act, may destroy in our people the effect of many a solemn expostulation and earnest warning, he was peculiarly circumspect in his every-day walk. He wished to be always in the presence of God. If he traveled, he laboured to enjoy God by the way, as well as to do good to others by dropping a word in season. In riding or walking, he seized opportunities of giving a useful tract; and, on principle, he preferred giving it to the person directly, rather than casting it on the road. The former way, he said, was more open—there was no stealth in it—and we ought to be as clear as crystal in speaking or acting for Jesus. In writing a note, however short, he sought to season it with salt. If he passed a night in a strange place, he tried to bear the place specially on his soul at the mercy-seat; and if compelled to take some rest from his too exhausting toils, his recreations were little else than a change of occupation, from one mode of glorifying God to another.[6] His beautiful hymn, "1 am a debtor," was written in May 1837 at a leisure hour.

Whatever be said in the pulpit, men will not much regard, though they may feel it at the time, if the minister does not say the same in private, with equal earnestness, in speaking with his people face to face; and it must be in our moments of most familiar intercourse with them, that we are thus to put the seal to all we say in public. Familiar moments are the times when the things that are most closely twined round the heart are brought out to view; and shall we forbear, by tacit consent, to introduce the Lord that bought us into such happy hours? We must not only speak faithfully to our people in our sermons, but live faithfully for them too. Perhaps it may be found, that the reason why many, who preach the gospel fully and in all earnestness, are not owned of God in the conversion of souls, is to be found in their defective exhibition of grace in these easy moments of life. "Them that honor me, I will honor;" 1 Samuel 2:30. It was noticed long ago that men will give you leave to preach against their sins as much as you will, if so be you will but be easy with them when you have done, and talk as they do, and live as they live. How much otherwise it was with Mr. M‘Cheyne, all who knew him are witnesses! His visits to friends were times when he sought to do good to their souls; and never was he satisfied unless he could guide the conversation to bear upon the things of eternity. When he could not do so, he generally remained silent. And yet his demeanor was easy and pleasant to all, exhibiting at once meekness of faith, and delicacy of feeling. There was in his character a high refinement that came out in poetry and true politeness; and there was something in his graces that reminded one of his own remark, when explaining "the spices" of Song of Solomon 4:16, when he said, that "some believers were a garden that had fruit trees, and so were useful; but we ought also to have spices and so be attractive." Wishing to convey his grateful feelings to a fellow laborer in Dundee, he sent him a Hebrew Bible, with these few lines prefixed :

"Anoint mine eyes,

O holy Dove! That I may prize This book of love.

Unstop mine ear, Made deaf by sin, That I may hear Thy voice within.

Break my hard heart,

Jesus, my Lord, In the inmost part Hide thy sweet word."

It was on a similar occasion, in 1838, that he wrote the lines, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet." At another time, sitting under a shady tree, and casting his eye on the hospitable dwelling in which he found a pleasant retreat, his grateful feelings flowed out to his kind friend in the lines that follow:—

"PEACE TO THIS HOUSE"

Long may peace within this dwelling Have its resting place;

Angel shields all harm repelling—

God, their God of grace. May the dove-like Spirit guide them To the upright land! May the Saviour-Shepherd feed them From his gentle hand!

Never was there one more beloved as a friend, and seldom any whose death could cause so many to feel as if no other friend could ever occupy his room. Same, too, can say that so much did they learn from his holy walk, "that it is probable a day never passes wherein they have not some advantage from his friendship."[7]

I find written on the leaf of one of his note-books, a short memorandum: "Rules worth remembering.—When visiting in a family, whether ministerially or otherwise, speak particularly to the strangers about eternal things. Perhaps God has brought you together just to save that soul." And then he refers to some instances which occurred to himself, in which God seemed to honor a word spoken in this incidental way. In this spirit, he was enabled for nearly three years to give his strength to his Master’s service. Sickness sometimes laid him aside, and taught him what he had to suffer; but he rose from it to go forth again to his joyful labours. Often, after a toilsome day, there were inquirers waiting for him, so that he had to begin work afresh in a new form. But this was his delight; it was a kind of interruption which he allowed even on a Saturday, in the midst of his studies. He was led to resolve not to postpone any inquirers till a future time, by finding that having done so on one occasion at a pressing moment, the individuals never returned; and so alive was he to the responsibilities of his office, that he ever after feared to lose such an opportunity of speaking with souls at a time when they were aroused to concern. Busy one evening with some extra-parochial work, he was asked if any person should be admitted to see him that night. "Surely—what do we live for?" was his immediate reply. It was his manner, too, on a Saturday afternoon, to visit one or two of his sick who seemed near the point of death, with the view of being thus stirred up to a more direct application of the truth to his flock on the morrow, as dying men on the edge of eternity.

We have already observed that in his doctrine there was nothing that differed from the views of truth laid down in the standards of our Church. He saw no inconsistency in preaching an electing God, who "calleth whom he will," and a salvation free to "whosoever will;" nor in declaring the absolute sovereignty of God, and yet the unimpaired responsibility of man. He preached Christ as a gift laid down by the Father for every sinner freely to take. In the beginning of his ministry, as he preached the fullness of the glad tidings, and urged on his people that there was enough in the glad tidings to bring direct and immediate assurance to every one who really believed them, some of his flock were startled. For he ever preached, that, while it is true that there are believers, like Heman or Asaph, who do not enjoy full assurance of the love of God, yet certainly no true believer

should remain satisfied in the absence of this blessed peace. Not a few had hitherto been accustomed to take for granted that they might be Christians, though they knew of no change; and had never thought of enjoying the knowledge of the love of God as their present portion. They heard that others, who were reckoned believers, had doubts; so they had come to consider fears and doubts as the very marks of a believing soul. The consequence had been, that, in past days, many concluded themselves to be Christians, because they seemed to be in the very state of mind of which those who were reputed to be believers spoke, viz., doubt and alarm. Alas! in their case there could be nothing else, for they had only a name to live.

Someone wrote to him, putting several questions concerning conversion, assurance, and faith, which had been stirred up by his ministry. The import of the questions may be gathered from his reply, which was as follows:—

"1.I doubt if there are many saints who live and die without a comfortable sense o f forgiveness, and acceptance with God. The saints of whom the Bible speaks seem to have enjoyed it richly both in life and death. See the murderers of our Lord, Acts 2:41; the Ethiopian, Acts 8:39; the jailor, Acts 16:35. David also felt it, sinful man though he was, Romans 4:6. Paul also prayed that the Romans might have it, Romans 15:13. I fear this objection is generally made by those who are living in sin, and do not wish to know the dangerous road they are on.

"2. A sense of forgiveness does not proceed from marks seen in yourself, but from a discovery o f the beauty, worth, and freeness of Christ; Psalms 34:5. We look out for peace not in. At the same time there is also an assurance rising from what we see in ourselves: the seal of the Spirit, love to the brethren, &c., are the chief marks.

"3. Feeling a body of sin is a mark that we are like Paul, and that we are Christ's; Romans 7:1-25; Galatians 5:17. Paul was cheerful with a body of sin; and so ought we to be. So was David, and all the saints.

"4. I do not think there is any difference between those converted within these few years, and those who were Christians before. Many of those converted since I came are, I fear, very unholy. I fear this more than anything. I fear there is too much talk and too little reality. Still there are many good figs—many of whom I am persuaded better things, and things that accompany salvation. The answer to your question I fear is this, that many used to be taken for Christians before, who had only a name to live, and were dead. I think there is more discrimination now. But take care and be not proud, for that goes before a fall. Take care of censorious judging of others, as if all must be converted in the same way.

"God moves in a mysterious way. He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy. To him alone be glory."

He thus stated his views on another occasion: Referring to Song of Solomon 6:3, "My Beloved is mine," following "My Beloved is gone down into his garden," he said, "This is the faith of assurance—a complete, unhesitating embracing of Christ as my righteousness and my strength and my all. A common mistake is that this clear conviction that Christ is mine, is an attainment far on in the divine life, and that it springs from evidences seen in my heart. When I see myself a new creature, Christ on the throne in my heart, love to the brethren, &c., it is often thought. that I may begin then to say 'My Beloved is mine.' How different this passage! The moment Jesus comes

down into the garden to the beds of spices—the moment he reveals himself, the soul cries out, ‘My Beloved is mine!’ So saith Thomas: John 20:27-28. The moment Jesus came in and revealed his wounds, Thomas cried out, ‘My Lord and my God.’ He did not look to see if he was believing, or if the graces of love and humility were reigning; but all he saw and thought of was Jesus and him crucified and risen." At a subsequent period, when preaching on Matthew 11:28, "Come unto me," he said, "I suppose it is almost impossible to explain what it is to come to Jesus, it is so simple. If you ask a sick person who had been healed, what it was to come and be healed, he could hardly tell you. As far as the Lord has given me light in this matter, and looking at what my own heart does in like circumstances, I do not feel that there is anything more in coming to Jesus, than just believing what God says about his Son to be true. I believe that many people keep themselves in darkness by expecting something more than this. Some of you will ask, ‘Is there no appropriating of Christ? no putting out the hand of faith? no touching the hem of his garment?’ I quite grant, beloved, there is such a thing, but I do think it is inseparable from believing the record. If the Lord persuades you of the glory and power of Immanuel, I feel persuaded that you cannot but choose him. It is like opening the shutters of a dark room; the sun that moment shines in. So, the eye that is opened to the testimony of God, receives Christ that moment." In the case of a faithful ministry, success is the rule; want of it the exception. For it is written, "In doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee;" 1 Timothy 4:16. Mr. M’Cheyne expected it, and the Lord exceeded all his hopes.

It was not yet common for persons in anxiety to go to their pastor for advice; but soon it became an almost weekly occurrence. While it was yet rare, two of his young people wrote a joint note, asking liberty to come and speak with him, "For we are anxious about our souls." Among those who came, there were those who had striven against the truth—persons, who used to run out of hearing when the Bible was read—throw down a tract if the name of God was in it—go quickly to sleep after a Sabbath’s pleasure in order to drown the fear of dropping into hell. There were many whose whole previous life had been but a threadbare profession. There were some open sinners, too. In short, the Lord glorified himself by the variety of those whom his grace subdued, and the variety of means by which his grace reached its object.

One could tell him that the reading of the chapter in the church with a few remarks, had been the time of her awakening. Another had been struck to the heart by some expression he used in his first prayer before sermon one Sabbath morning. But most were arrested in the preaching of the Word. An interesting case was that of one who was aroused to concern during his sermon on "Unto whom coming as unto a living stone." As he spoke of the Father taking the gem out of his bosom, and laying it down for a foundation-stone, she felt in her soul, "I know nothing of this precious stone; I am surely not converted." This led her to come and speak with him. She was not under deep conviction; but before going away he said, "You are a poor, vile worm; it is a wonder the earth does not open and swallow you up." These words were blessed to produce a very awful sense of sin. She came a second time with the arrows of the Almighty drinking up her spirit. For three months she remained in this state, till having once more come to him for counsel, the living voice of Jesus gave life to her soul while he was speaking of Christ’s words—"If thou knewest the gift of God," &c., and she went away rejoicing. Some awakened souls told him that since they were brought under concern, very many sermons, which they had heard from him before, and completely forgotten, had been brought back to mind. He used to remark that this might show what

the Resurrection day would awaken in the souls of gospel hearers. In dealing with souls he used to speak very plainly. One came to him who assented to his statements of the gospel, and yet refused to be comforted, always looking upon coming to Christ as something in addition to really believing the record God has given of his Son. He took John 3:16-17—"For God so loved the world that," &c. The woman said that "God did not care for her." Upon this he at once convicted her of making God a liar; and, as she went away in deep distress, his prayer was—"Lord, give her light." To another person, who spoke of having times of great joy, he shewed that these were times for worshipping God in the spirit. "You would come to a king when you were full dressed; so come to God, and abide in his presence as long as you can."

Sometimes he would send away souls, of whom he entertained good hope, with a text suited to their state. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Or he would say, "I hear of you that God has opened your heart; but remember not to trust to man's opinion. Remember an all-seeing Christ will be the judge at the great day." To another he said, "I have long hoped you were really under the wings of the Saviour: if it be so, abide there; do not be like Demas." To a prayer-meeting, consisting of a few young men that had been awakened to flee from wrath, he gave this advice, "Guard against all ambition to excel one another in expression. Remember the most spiritual prayer is a 'groan which cannot be uttered,' Romans 8:26; or a cry of 'Abba, Father,' Galatians 4:6."

There is very little recorded in his diary during these years; but what does exist will be read with deepest interest.

"March 28, 1838, Thursday.—I think of making this more a journal of my people, and the success, or otherwise, of my ministry. The first success among my people was at the time of my first sacrament: then it appeared. My first sermon, on Isaiah 61:1, was blessed to —— and some others. That on Ezekiel 22:14, 'Can thine heart endure,' &c., was blessed to awaken M. L. That on Song of Solomon 5:2, 'Open to me,' &c., the Sabbath after the Sacrament, was blessed to another. These were happy days. M. D. was awakened by coming to the communicants' class. Another by the action sermon. At the words, 'I know thee, Judas,' she trembled, and would have risen from the table. These were glad days when one and another were awakened. The people looked very stirred and anxious, every day coming to hear the words of eternal life—some inquiring in private every week. Now there is little of this. About fifteen cases came to my knowledge the first Sacrament, and two awakened who seem to have gone back. About eleven last Sacrament-four of these young men. Several Christians seemed quickened to greater joy, and greater love one to another. Now it appears to me there is much falling off : few seem awakened—few weep as they used to do.

"April 1—Sacrament-day.—Sweet season we have had. Never was more straitened and unfurnished in myself, and yet much helped. Kept in perfect peace, my mind being stayed on Thee. Preached on 'My God, my God, &c.; Psalms 22:1. Not fully prepared, yet found some peace in it. Fenced the tables from Christ's eyes of flame.' Little helped in serving the tables. Much peace in communion. Happy to be one with Christ! I, a vile worm; He, the Lord my righteousness. Mr. Cumming of Dumbarney served some tables; Mr. Somerville of Anderston served three, and preached in the evening on, 'Thou art all fair, my love.' Very full and refreshing. All sweet, sweet services. Come, thou north wind, and blow, thou south, upon this garden! May. this time be greatly

blessed! It is my third communion; it, may be my last. My Lord may come, or I may be sitting at another table soon. Moody, Candlish, and Mellis, were a. good preparation for this day; and the sweet word from. Cumming yesterday, ‘When the poor and needy seek water," &c. Lord, grant some awakening this day—to some bringing peace—comfort to mourners—fullness to believers—an advance in holiness in me and my children! 3 John 1:4. Lord, wean me from my sins, from my cares, and from this passing world. May Christ be all in all to me.

"Admitted about twenty-five young communicants; kept two back, and one or two stayed back. Some of them evidently brought to Christ. May the Lord be their God, their comforter, their all! May the morrow bring still richer things to us, that we may say as of to-night, ‘Thou hast kept the good wine until now.'"

Toward the close of this same year, some of his notices are as follows:—

"October 7—Evening.—In the Gaelic Chapel, on ‘I know that my Redeemer liveth,’ with more seeming power on the. people than for a while. I never remember of compelling, souls to come into Christ so much as in that discourse."

"Oct. 8.—A person of the name of —— came; I hope. really awakened by last night’s work; rather, by thee. I do. not know, however, whether grace is begun or not."

"Oct. 14.—Preached on ‘Forgiving injuries.’ Afternoon—on the Second Corning: ‘Let your loins be girded about," &c. Felt its power myself more than ever before, how the sudden coming of the Saviour constrains to a holy walk, separate from sin. Evening—Preached it over in the Ferry."

"Oct. 21.—Met young communicants in the evening. Good hope of all but one."

"Oct. 22.—A Jew preached in my church, Mr. Frey, to a crowded house. Felt much moved in hearing an Israelite after the flesh."

"Oct. 23.—Preached to sailors aboard the ‘Dr Carey,’ in the Docks. About 200, very attentive and impressed-like. On ‘I know that my Redeemer liveth.’ May the seed sown on the waters be found after many days."

November 1—Fast-day.—Afternoon—Mr. C. on ‘The Thief on the Cross.’ A most awakening and engaging sermon, enough to make sinners fly like a cloud, and as doves to their windows. The offers of Christ were let down very low, so that those low of stature may take hold."

"Nov. 5. —Mr. —— died this morning at seven o’clock. O that I may take warning, lest, after preaching to others, I myself be a castaway. Love of popularity is said to have been his besetting sin."

"December 2.—Errol communion. Heard Mr. Grierson preach on Christ’s entry into Jerusalem. Served two tables. Evening—Preached to a large congregation, on ‘Unto you, O men, I call,’ &c. The free invitation of the Saviour. May some find him this day!" In addition to the other blessings which the Lord sent by his means to the place where he laboured, it was obvious to all that the tone of Christians was raised, as much by his holy walk, as by his heavenly ministry. Yet, during these pleasant days, he had much reproach to bear. He was the object of supercilious contempt to formal, cold-hearted ministers, and of bitter hatred to many of the ungodly. At this day, there are

both ministers and professing Christians of whom Jesus would say, "The world cannot hate you," (John 7:7), for the world cannot hate itself ; but it was not so with Mr. M'Cheyne. Very deep was the enmity borne to him by some—all the deeper, because the only cause of it was his likeness to his Master. But nothing turned him aside. He was full of ardor, yet ever gentle, and meek and generous; full of zeal, yet never ruffled by his zeal; and not only his strength of "first love" (Revelation 2:4), but even its warm glow, seemed in him to suffer no decay.

Thus he spent the first years of his ministry in Dundee. The town began to feel that they had a peculiar man of God in the midst of them; for he lived as a true son of Levi. "My covenant was with him of life and peace, and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips; he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity;" (Malachi 2:5-6).

ENDNOTES:

[1] "The Acceptable Year of the Lord" was one of these Anniversary Sermons, preached November 1840.

[2] Compare Zechariah 4:12, with John 15:5.

[3] Baxter (Reformed Pastor) says, "I dare prognosticate from knowledge of the nature of true grace, that all godly ministers will make conscience of this duty, and address themselves to it, unless they be, by some extraordinary accident, disabled."

[4] The first text he gave to be thus hidden in the heart was Isaiah 34:15 "Until the Spirit be poured out from on high."

[5] "Gratior est pulchro veniens e corpore virtus."

[6] Baxter's words are not less than the truth. "Recreation to a minister must be as whetting is with the mower, that is, only to be used so far as is necessary for his work. May a physician in the plague-time take any more relaxation or recreation than is necessary for his life, when so many are expecting his help in a case of life and death?" "Will you stand by and see sinners gasping under the pangs of death, and say, God doth not require me to make myself a drudge to save them? Is this the voice of ministerial or Christian compassion, or rather of sensual laziness and diabolical cruelty?"-Reformed Pastor vi. 6.

[7] 'Ey■ μεν δη χατανο■ν τον ■νδρδς την τε σοφ■αν χαι την γερνα■τητα, otisε μ■ μεμν■σθαι δνναμαι ■ντ■ν,οντs μεμνημ■νος μ■ ονχ ■παινε■ν. Ει δ■ τις ziuv ■ρετ■ς ε'φιεμενων ■φελιμωτ■ρφ τινl Σωκρ■τονς σννεy■νετο, dχε■νον ε~y■ τdν ■νδρα ■ξιομαχαριστδτατον νομ■ζω.

04.04. His Mission to Palestine and the Jews

CHAPTER IV HIS MISSION TO PALESTINE AND THE JEWS "Here am I; send me."

Isaiah 6:8.

Though engaged night and day with his flock in St Peter’s, Mr. M’Cheyne ever cherished a missionary spirit. "This place hardens me for a foreign land," was his remark on one occasion. This spirit he sought to kindle yet more by reading missionary intelligence for his own use, and often to his people at his weekly prayer-meeting. The necessities both of his own parish, and of the world at large, lay heavy on his soul; and when an opportunity of evangelizing occurred, there was none in Scotland more ready to embrace it. He seemed one who stood with his loins girt—"Here am I ; send me."

Another motive to incessant activity, was the decided impression on his mind that his career would be short. From the very first days of his ministry he had a strong feeling of this nature; and his friends remember how his letters used to be sealed with this seal, "The night cometh." At a time when he was apparently in his usual health, we were talking together on the subject of the Premillennial Advent. We had begun to speak of the practical influence which the belief of that doctrine might have. At length he said that he saw no force in the arguments generally urged against it, though he had difficulties of his own in regard to it. And, perhaps (he added), it is well for you, who enjoy constant health, to be so firmly persuaded that Christ is thus to come; but my sickly frame makes me feel every day that my time may be very short.

He was, therefore, in some measure prepared, when, in the midst of his laborious duties, he was compelled to stand still and see what the Lord would do. In the close of 1838, some symptoms appeared that alarmed his friends. His constitution, never robust, began to feel the effects of unremitting labour; for, occasionally, he would spend six hours in visiting, and then, the same evening, preach in some room to all the families whom he had that day visited. Very generally, too, on Sabbath, after preaching twice to his own flock, he was engaged in ministering somewhere else in the evening. But now, after any great exertion, he was attacked by violent palpitation of heart. It soon increased, affecting him in his hours of study; and, at last, it became almost constant. Upon this, his medical advisers insisted on a total cessation of his public work; for though, as yet, there was no organic change on his lungs, there was every reason to apprehend that that might be the result. Accordingly, with deep regret, he left Dundee to seek rest and change of occupation, hoping it would be only for a week or two. A few days after leaving Dundee, he writes from Edinburgh, in reply to the anxious inquiries of his friend Mr. Grierson, "The beating of the heart is not now so constant as it was before. The pitcher draws more quietly at the cistern; so that, by the kind providence of our Heavenly Father, I may be spared a little longer before the silver cord be loosed, and the golden bowl be broken."

It was found that his complaints were such as would be likely to give way under careful treatment, and a temporary cessation from all exertion. Under his father’s roof, therefore, in Edinburgh, he

resigned himself to the will of his Father in heaven. But deeply did he feel the trial of being laid aside from his loved employment, though he learnt of Him who was meek and lowly, to make the burden light in his own way, by saying, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight." He wrote to Mr. Grierson again, January 5, 1839, "I hope this affliction will be blessed to me. I always feel much need of God's afflicting hand. In the whirl of active labour there is so little time for watching, and for bewailing, and seeking grace, to oppose the sins of our ministry, that I always feel it a blessed thing when the Saviour takes me aside from the crowd, as he took the blind man out of the town, and removes the veil, and clears away obscuring mists; and by his Word and Spirit leads to deeper peace and a holier walk. Ah! there is nothing like a calm look into the eternal world to teach us the emptiness of human praise, the sinfulness of self-seeking and vain glory—to teach us the preciousness of Christ, who is called 'The Tried Stone.' I have been able to be twice at College to hear a lecture from Dr. Chalmers. I have also been privileged to smooth down the dying pillow of an old school-companion, leading him to a fuller joy and peace in believing. A poor heavy-laden soul, too, from Larbert, I have had the joy of leading toward the Saviour. So that even when absent from my work, and when exiled, as it were, God allows me to do some little things for his name."

He was led to look more carefully into this trying dispensation, and began to anticipate blessed results from it to his Rock. He was well aware how easily the flock begin to idolize the shepherd, and how prone the shepherd is to feel somewhat pleased with this sinful partiality of his people, and to be uplifted by his success. "I sometimes think," is his remark in a letter, dated January 18, "that a great blessing may come to my people in my absence. Often God does not bless us when we are in the midst of our labours, lest we shall say, 'My hand and my eloquence have done it' He removes us into silence, and then pours 'down a blessing so that there is no room to receive it;' so that all that see it cry out,' 'It is the Lord!' This was the way in the South Sea Islands. May it really be so with my dear people!" Nor did he err in this view of the dispensation. All these ends, and more also, were to be accomplished by it. An anticipation like that which is expressed in this and other letters, especially in his Pastoral Letter of March 20, may justly be regarded as a proof from experience that the Lord teaches his people to expect and pray for what he means soon to work. And here the Lord accomplished his designs in the kindest of all ways; for he removed his servant for a season from the flock to which he had been so blessed, lest even his own children should begin to glory in man; but yet he took that servant to another sphere of labour in the meantime; and then, when the blessing was safely bestowed, brought him back to rejoice over it.

He was still hoping for, and submissively asking from the Lord, speedy restoration to his people in Dundee, and occasionally sending to them an epistle that breathed the true pastor's soul; when one day, as he was walking with Dr. Candlish, conversing on the Mission to Israel which had lately been resolved on, an idea seemed suddenly suggested to Dr. Candlish. He asked Mr. M'Cheyne what he would think of "being useful to the Jewish cause, during his cessation from labour, by going abroad to make personal inquiries into the state of Israel?" The idea, thus suddenly suggested, led to all the after results of the Mission of Inquiry. Mr. M'Cheyne found himself all at once called to carry salvation to the Jew, as he had hitherto done to the Gentile, and his soul was filled with joy and wonder. His medical friends highly approved of the proposal, as being likely to conduce very much to the removal of his complaints-the calm, steady excitement of such a journey being likely to restore the tone of his whole constitution.

Dr. Black of Aberdeen readily consented to use his remarkable talents as a scholar in this cause; and Dr. Keith intimated his expectation of soon joining the deputation. I also had been chosen to go forth on this mission of love to Israel; but some difficulties stood in the way of my leaving my charge at Collace. In these circumstances, Mr. M'Cheyne wrote to me, March 12, from Edinburgh. MY DEAR A.—I have received so many tokens for good from God in this matter, that it were a shame indeed if I did not trust him to perfect all which concerns me. I am glad you have determined to trust all in the hands of Israel's God. I am quite ready to go this week, or next week, but am deeply anxious to be sure that you are sent with me. You know, dear A., I could not labour in this cause, nor enjoy it, if you were not to be with me in it. Would you be ready to give your Jewish lecture on the evening of Sabbath week? * * * And now, pray for us, that we may be sent of God; and, weak as we are, that we may be made Boanerges—that we may be blessed to win some souls, and to stir up Christians to love Zion. Much interest is already excited, and I do look for a blessing. Speak to your people as on the brink of eternity. * * * As to books, I am quite at a loss. My Hebrew Bible, Greek Testament, &c., and perhaps Bridge's Christian Ministry for general purposes—I mean, for keeping us in mind of our ministerial work. I do hope we shall go forth in the Spirit; and though straitened in language, may we not be blessed, as Brainerd was, through an interpreter? May we not be blessed also to save some English, and to stir up missionaries? My health is only tolerable; I would be better if we were once away. I am often so troubled, as to be made willing to go or stay, to die or to live. Yet it is encouraging to be used in the Lord's service again, and in so interesting a manner. What if we should see the heavenly Jerusalem before the earthly? I am taking drawing materials, that I may carry away remembrances of the Mount of Olives, Tabor, and the Sea of Galilee. The interest that this proposed journey excited in Scotland was very great. Nor was it merely the somewhat romantic interest attached to the land where the Lord had done most of his mighty works; there were also in it the deeper feelings of a Scriptural persuasion that Israel was still "beloved for the fathers' sake." For some time previous, Jerusalem had come into mind, and many godly pastors were standing as watchmen over its ruined walls (Isaiah 62:6), stirring up the Lord's remembrancers. Mr. M'Cheyne had been one of these. His views of the importance of the Jews in the eye of God, and, therefore, of their importance as a sphere of missionary labour, were very clear and decided. He agreed in the expectation expressed in one of the Course of Lectures delivered before the deputation set out, that we might anticipate an outpouring o f the Spirit when our Church should stretch out its hands to the Jew as well as to the Gentile. In one letter, he says, "To seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel is an object very near to my heart, as my people know it has ever been. Such an enterprise may probably draw down unspeakable blessings on the Church of Scotland, according to the promise, 'they shall prosper who love thee'." In another, "I now see plainly that all our views about the Jews being the chief object of missionary exertion are plain and sober truths, according to the Scripture." Again, "I feel convinced that if we pray that the world may be converted in God's way, we will seek the good of the Jews, and the more we do so, the happier we will be in our own soul. You should always keep up a knowledge of the prophecies regarding Israel." In his preaching he not unfrequently said on this subject, "We should be like God in his peculiar affections; and the whole Bible shows that God has ever had, and still has, a peculiar love to the Jews." The news of his proposed absence alarmed his flock at Dundee. They manifested their care for him more than ever; and not a few wrote expostulatory letters. To one of these well-meant remonstrances, he replied, "I rejoice exceedingly in the interest you take in me, not so much for my own sake as that I hope it is a sign

you know and love the Lord Jesus. Unless God had himself shut up the door of return to my people, and opened this new door to me, I never could have consented to go. I am not at all unwilling to spend and be spent in God's service, though I have often found that the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved. But God has very plainly shewn me that I may perform a deeply important work for his ancient people, and at the same time be in the best way of seeking a return of health."—"A minister will make a poor savior in the day of wrath. It is not knowing a minister, or loving one, or hearing one, or having a name to live that will save. You need to have your hand on the head of the Lamb for yourselves; Leviticus 1:4. You need to have your eye on the brazen serpent for yourselves; John 3:14-15. I fear I will need to be a swift witness against many of my people in the day of the Lord, that they looked to me, and not to Christ, when I preached to them. I always feared that some of you loved to hear the Word, who do not love to do it. I always feared there were many of you who loved the Sabbath meetings, and the class, and the Thursday evenings, who yet were not careful to walk with God, to be meek, chaste, holy, loving, harmless, Christ-like, God-like. Now, God wants you to think, that the only end of a gospel ministry is, that you may be holy. Believe me, God himself could not make you happy, except you be holy." At this crisis in his people's history he sought from the Lord one to supply his place—one who would feed the flock and gather in wanderers during their own pastor's absence: The Lord granted him his desire by sending Mr. William C. Burns, son of the minister of Kilsyth. In a letter to him, dated March 12th, the following remarkable words occur:—"You are given in answer to prayer, and these gifts are, I believe, always without exception blessed. I hope you may be a thousand times more blessed among them than ever I was. Perhaps there are many souls that would never have been saved under my ministry, who may be touched under yours; and God has taken this method of bringing you into my place. His name is Wonderful." This done, and being already disengaged from his flock, he set out for London to make arrangements for the rest of the deputation, who soon after were all sent forth by the brethren with many prayers. None had more prayers offered in their behalf than he—and they were not offered in vain. During all his journeyings the Lord strengthened him, and saved him out of all distresses.

It was a singular event—often still it looks like a dream—that four ministers should be so suddenly called away from their quiet labours in the towns and villages of Scotland, and be found in a few weeks traversing the land of Israel, with their Bibles in their hand, eye-witnesses of prophecy fulfilled, and spies of the nakedness of Israel's worship and leanness of soul. The details of that journey need not be given here. They have been already recorded in the "Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews, from the Church of Scotland, in 1839." But there are some incidents worthy to be preserved, which could find a place only in such a record of private life and feelings as we are now engaged in. When Mr. M'Cheyne was on board the vessel that carried him to London, he at once discovered an interesting young Jew, who seemed, however, unwilling to be recognized as belonging to the seed of Abraham. He made several attempts to draw this young Israelite into close conversation; and before parting, read with him the 1st Psalm in Hebrew, and pressed home the duty of meditating on the Word of the Lord. In visiting Bethnal Green, he has noted down that it was very sweet to hear Jewish children sing a hymn to Jesus, the burden of which was ■■yEl[h■kf "Slain for us!" The awful profanation of the holy Sabbath which we witnessed on the streets of Paris, called forth the following appeal, in a letter to Mr. Macdonald of Blairgowrie. His spirit had been stirred in him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. "Stand in the breach, dear friend, and lift up your voice like a trumpet, lest Scotland become another France. You know how many in

our own parishes trample on the holy day. They do not know how sweet it is to walk with God all that holy day. Isaiah 58:11-14 is a sweet text to preach from. Exodus 31:13 is also very precious, shewing that the real sanctifying of the Sabbath is one of God's signs or marks which he puts upon his people. It is one of the letters of the new name, which no one knoweth but they who receive it." In his brief notes during the first part of the journey, he has seldom failed to mark our seasons of united prayer, such as those in the cabin of the vessel on the passage to Genoa; for these were times of refreshing to his spirit. And his feelings, as he stood in that city, and surveyed its palaces, are expressed in a few lines, which he sent homeward from the spot. "A foreign land draws us nearer God. He is the only one whom we know here. We go to him as to one we know: all else is strange. Every step I take, and every new country I see, makes me feel more that there is nothing real, nothing true, but what is everlasting. The whole world lieth in wickedness: its judgments are fast hastening. The marble palaces, among which I have been wandering to-night, shall soon sink like a millstone in the waters of God's righteous anger; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." At Valetta, in the island of Malta, he wrote—"My heart beats a little to-day, but another sail will do me good. One thing I know, that I am in the hands of my Father in heaven, who is all love to me—not for what I am in myself, but for the beauty he sees in Immanuel." The classic shores of Italy and Greece are invested with a peculiar interest, such as may raise deep emotions even in a sanctified soul. "We tried to recollect many of the studies of our boyhood. But what is classic learning to us now? I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. And yet these recollections tinged every object, and afforded us a most lawful pleasure."

During our voyage, it was his delight to search into the Scriptures, just as at home. And so much did he calculate on an unceasing study of the Word during all our journey, that he took with him some notes I had written on each chapter of the Book of Leviticus, observing it would be suitable meditation for us while busy with Jewish minds. At home and abroad he had an insatiable appetite for all the Word—both for the types of the Old Testament, and the plain text of the New. On one occasion, before leaving home, in studying Numbers 4:1-49, he fixed the different duties assigned to the Priests on his memory, by means of the following lines:—

"The Kohathites upon their shoulder bear The holy vessels, covered with all care; The Gershonites receive an easier charge, Two waggons full of cords and curtains large;

Merari's sons four ponderous waggons load With boards and pillars of the house of God:"

He acted on the principle that whatever God has revealed must deserve our study and prayerful investigation.

Arrived at Alexandria in Egypt, and thence proceeding onward to Palestine by the way of the desert, we found ourselves set down on a new stage of experience. Mr. M'Cheyne observed on the silence of the desert places—"It is a remarkable feeling to be quite alone in a desert place; it gives similar feelings to fasting; it brings God near. Living in tents, and moving among such lonely scenes for many days, awake many new ideas. It is a strange life we lead in the wilderness. Round and round there is a complete circle of sand and wilderness-shrubs; above, a blue sky without a cloud, and a scorching sun which often made the thermometer stand at 96° in our tents. When evening came, the sun went down as it does in the ocean, and the stars came riding forth in their glory; and we used to pitch all alone, with none but our poor ignorant Bedouins and their camels, and our all-knowing, all-loving God beside us. When morning began to dawn, our

habitations were taken down. Often we have found ourselves shelterless before being fully dressed. What a type of the tent of our body! Ah! how often taken down before the soul is made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." To Mr. Bonar of Larbert he writes: "I had no idea that traveling in the wilderness was so dreadful a thing as it is. The loneliness I often felt quite solemnized me. The burning sun overhead-round and round a circle of barren sand, chequered only by a few prickly shrubs (‘the heath of the wilderness,’ of which Jeremiah speaks}—no rain, not a cloud, the wells often like that of Marah, and far between. I now understand well the murmurings of Israel. I feel that our journey proved and tried my own heart very much." When we look back, and remember that he who thus stands on the sandy desert road between Egypt and Palestine, and looks on its singular scenery, is one who but lately was to be found busy night and day in dealing with the souls of men in the densely peopled streets of a town teeming with population, we are led to wonder at the ways of the Lord. But, is it not a moment which may remind us, that the God who sent Elijah to the brook at Cherith is the same God still? and that the wise, considerate, loving Master who said, "Come into a desert place and rest awhile," is as loving, considerate, and wise as he was then? At Balteen, a small village in Egypt, I well remember the indignation that fired his countenance, when our Arab attendants insisted on traveling forward on the Sabbath-day, rather than continue sitting under a few palm-trees, breathing a sultry, furnace-like atmosphere, with nothing more than just such supply of food as sufficed. He could not bear the thought of being deprived of the Sabbath-rest; it was needful for our souls as much in the wilderness as in the crowded city; and if few glorify God in that desolate land, so much the more were we called on to fill these solitudes with our songs of praise. It was in this light he viewed our position; and when we had prevailed, and were seated under the palms, he was excited to deep emotion, though before quite unnerved by the heat, at the sight of a row of poor wretched Egyptians, who gathered round us. "O that I could speak their language, and tell them of salvation!" was his impassioned wish. An event occurred at that time in which the hand of God afterwards appeared very plain, though it then seemed very dark to us. Dr. Black fell from his camel in the midst of the sandy desert, and none of all our company could conjecture what bearing on the object of our Mission this sad occurrence could have. Is it a frown on our undertaking? or can it really be a movement of His kind, guiding hand? We often spoke of it; in our visit to Galilee we thought that we saw some purposes evolving; but there was still something unexplained. Now, however, the reason appears; even that event was of the Lord, in wise and kind design. But for that fall, our fathers in the deputation would not have sailed up the Danube on their way to Vienna, and Pesth would not have been visited. This accident, which mainly disabled Dr. Black from undertaking the after fatigue of exploring Galilee, was the occasion of directing the steps of our two fathers to that station, where a severe stroke of sickness was made the means of detaining Dr. Keith till they had learned that there was an open door among the Jews. And there, accordingly, it has been that the Lord has poured down his Spirit on the Jews that have come to our missionaries, so remarkably that no Jewish Mission seems ever to have been blessed with deeper conversions. There is nothing but truth in the remark made by one of our number:—"Dr. Black’s fall from the camel was the first step towards Nab." "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord;" Psalms 107:43. Indeed, whether it was that we were prepared to expect, and therefore were peculiarly ready to observe, or whether it was really the case that the watchful eye of our Lord specially guided us, certain it is that we thought we could perceive the whole course we took signally marked by Providence. There were many prayers in Scotland

ascending up in our behalf, and the High Priest gave the answer by shining upon our path. Mr. M'Cheyne has stated—"Far much of our safety I feel indebted to the prayers of my people, I mean the Christians among them, who do not forget us. If the veil of the world's machinery were lifted off, how much we would find is done in answer to the prayers of God's children."

Many things lost somewhat of their importance in our view, when examined amid the undistracted reflections of the long desert journey, where for many days we had quiet, like the quiet of death, around us all night long, and even during the bright day. It is the more interesting, on this very account, to know his feelings there on the subject of the ministry. As his camel slowly bore him over the soft sandy soil, much did he ruminate on the happy days when he was permitted to use all his strength in preaching Jesus to dying men. "Use your health while you have it, my dear friend and brother. Do not cast away peculiar opportunities that may never come again. You know not when your last Sabbath with your people may come. Speak for eternity. Above all things, cultivate your own spirit. A word spoken by you when your conscience is clear, and your heart full of God's Spirit, is worth ten thousand words spoken in unbelief and sin. This was my great fault in the ministry. Remember it is God, and not man, that must have the glory. It is not much speaking, but much faith, that is needed. Do not forget us. Do not forget the Saturday night meeting, nor the Monday morning thanksgiving." Thus he wrote on his way to a fellow-laborer in Scotland. On our first Sabbath in the Holy Land, our tent had been pitched in the vicinity of a colony of ants. It was in the tribe of Simeon we were encamped; it was the scenery of the Promised Land we had around us; and one of the similitudes of the blessed Word was illustrated within our view. He opened his Bible at Proverbs 6:6-8, and, as he read, noted—"I. Consider her ways. Most souls are lost for want of consideration. II. The ant has no guide, overseer, or ruler; no officer, no one to command or encourage her. How differently situated is the child of God! III. Provideth her meat in the summer, &c. Some have thought that this teaches us to heap up money; but quite the reverse. The ant lays up no store for the future. It is all for present use. She is always busy summer and winter. The lesson is one of constant diligence in the Lord's work."

Many a time in these days, when our attendants in the evening were driving in the stakes of our tent and stretching its cords, he would lie down on the ground under some tree that sheltered him from the dew. Completely exhausted by the long day's ride, he would lie almost speechless for half an hour; and then, when the palpitation of his heart had a little abated, would propose that we two should pray together. Often, too, did he say to me, when thus stretched on the ground-not impatiently, but very earnestly—"Shall I ever preach to my people again?" I was often reproved by his unabated attention to personal holiness; for this care was never absent from his mind, whether he was at home in his quiet chamber, or on the sea, or in the desert. Holiness in him was manifested, not by efforts to perform duty, but in a way so natural, that you recognized therein the easy outflowing of the indwelling Spirit. The fountain springing up unto everlasting life (John 4:14) in his soul, welled forth its living waters alike in the familiar scenes of his native Scotland, and under the olive-trees of Palestine. Prayer and meditation on the Word were never forgotten; and a peace that the world could not give kept his heart and mind. When we were detained a day at Gaza, in very tantalizing circumstances, his remark was, "Jehovah Jireh; we are at that mount again." It was sweet at any time to be with him, for both nature and grace in him drew the very heart; but there were moments of enjoyment in these regions of Palestine that drew every cord still closer, and created unknown sympathies. Such was that evening when we climbed Samson's Hill

together. Sitting there, we read over the references to the place in the Word of God; and then he took out his pencil and sketched the scene, as the sun was sinking in the West. This done, we sang some verses of a Psalm appropriate to the spot, offered up prayer, and, slowly descending, conversed of all we saw, and of all that was brought to mind by the scenery around us, till we reached our tent. In approaching Jerusalem, we came up the Pass of Latroon. He writes, "The last day's journey to Jerusalem was the finest I ever had in all my life. For four hours we were ascending the rocky pass upon our patient camels. It was like the finest of our Highland scenes, only the trees and flowers, and the voice of the turtle, told us that it was Immanuel's land." Riding along, he remarked that to have seen the Plain of Judea and this mountain-pass was enough to reward us for a11 our fatigue; and then began to call up passages of the Old Testament Scriptures which might seem to refer to such scenery as that before us.

During our ten days at Jerusalem, there were few objects within reach that we did not eagerly seek to visit. "We stood at the turning of the road where Jesus came near, and beheld the city, and wept over it. And if we had had more of the mind that was in Jesus, I think we should have wept also." This was his remark in a letter homeward; and to Mr. Bonar of Larbert, he expressed his feelings in regard to the Mount of Olives and its vicinity: "I remember, the day when I saw you last, you said, that there were other discoveries to be made than those in the physical world—that there were sights to be seen in the spiritual world, and depths to be penetrated, of far greater importance. I have often thought of the truth of your remark. But if there is a place on earth where physical scenery can help us to discover divine things, I think it is Mount Olivet. Gethsemane at your feet leads your soul to meditate on Christ's love and determination to undergo divine wrath for us. The cup was set before him there, and there he said, 'Shall I not drink it?' The spot where he wept makes you think of his divine compassion, mingling with his human tenderness—his awful justice, that would not spare the city—his superhuman love, that wept over its coming misery! Turning the other way, and looking to the south-east, you see Bethany, reminding you of his love to his own-that his name is love—that in all our afflictions he is afflicted—that those who are in their graves shall one day come forth at his command. A little farther down you see the Dead Sea, stretching far among the mountains its still and sullen waters. This deepens and solemnizes all, and makes you go away, saying, 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?'"

He wrote to another friend in Scotland, from Mount Zion, where we were then dwelling.

MOUNT ZION, June 12, 1839 MY DEAR FRIEND,—Now that we are in the most wonderful spot in all this world—where Jesus lived, and walked, and prayed, and died, and will come again—I doubt not you will be anxious to hear how we come on. I am thankful that ever he privileged us to come to this land. I heard of my flock yesterday by a letter from home-the first I have received, dated 8th May. * * * We are living in one of the missionaries' houses on Mount Zion. My window looks out upon where the Temple was, the beautiful Mount of Olives rising behind. The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.—Yours, &c.

One evening, after our visit to Sychar, he referred to the Bible which I had dropped into Jacob's Well. We were then resting from our journey in our tents. Soon after, he penned on a leaf of his note-book the following fragment:—

"My own loved Bible, must I part from thee, Companion of my toils by land and sea;

Man of my counsels, soother of distress, Guide of my steps through this world’s wilderness! In darkest nights, a lantern to my feet; In gladsome days, as dropping honey sweet. When first I parted from my quiet home, At thy command, for Israel’s good to roam, Thy gentle voice said, ‘For Jerusalem pray, So shall Jehovah prosper all thy way.’ When through the lonely wilderness we strayed, Sighing in vain for palm-trees’ cooling shade, Thy words of comfort hushed each rising fear, ‘The shadow of thy mighty Rock is near.’ And when we pitched our tent on Judah’s hills, Or thoughtful mused beside Siloa’s rills;

Whene’er we climbed Mount Olivet, to gaze Upon the sea, where stood in ancient days The heaven-struck Sodom——

Sweet record of the past, to faith’s glad eyes, Sweet promiser of glories yet to rise!"[1] At the foot of Carmel, during the seven days we were in quarantine under the brow of the hill, we had time to recall many former scenes; and in these circumstances he wrote the hymn, "The Fountain o f Siloam."

Here, too, he had leisure to write home; and most graphically does he describe our journey from Alexandria onward.

CARMEL, June 26, 1839. MY DEAR FATHER, MOTHER, &c.—It is a long time since I have been able to write to you-this being the first time since leaving Egypt that any one has appeared to carry letters for us. I must, therefore, begin by telling you that, by the good hand of our God upon me, I am in excellent health, and have been ever since I wrote you last. Fatigues we have had many, and much greater than I anticipated; hardships and dangers we have also encountered, but God has brought us all safely through and in fully better condition than when we began. You must not imagine that I have altogether lost the palpitation of my heart, for it often visits me to humble and prove me; still I believe it is a good deal better than it was, and its visits are not nearly so frequent. I hope very much, that in a cold bracing climate, and with less fatigue, I may, perhaps, not feel it at all. I was very thankful to receive your letter, dated 8th May—the first since leaving home. I was delighted to hear of your health and safety, and of the peaceful communion at St Peter’s. The public news was alarming and humbling.[2] I suppose I had better begin at the beginning, and go over all our journeyings from the land of Egypt through the howling wilderness, to this sweet land of promise. I would have written journalwise (as my mother would say) from time to time, so that I might have had an interesting budget of news ready; but you must remember it is a more fatiguing thing to ride twelve or fourteen hours on a camel’s back, in a sandy wilderness, than in our home excursions; and I could often do nothing more than lie down on my rug and fall asleep.

We left Alexandria on 16th May 1839, parting from many kind friends in that strange city. We and our baggage were mounted on seventeen donkeys, like the sons of Jacob, when they carried corn out of Egypt. Our saddle was our bedding, viz., a rug to lie on, a pillow for the head, and a quilt to wrap ourselves in. We afterwards added a straw mat to put below all. We had procured two tents—one large, and a smaller one which Andrew and I occupy. The donkeys are nice nimble little animals, going about five miles an hour; a wild Arab accompanies each donkey. We have our two Arab servants, to whom I now introduce you—Ibrahim, a handsome small-made Egyptian, and Achmet the cook, a dark good-natured fellow, with a white turban and bare black legs. Ibrahim speaks a little English and Italian, and Achmet, Italian—in addition to their native Arabic. I soon made friends with our Arab donkey-men, learning Arabic words and phrases from them, which

pleased them greatly. We journeyed by the Bay of Aboukir, close by the sea, which tempered the air of the desert. At night we reached Rosetta, a curious half-inhabited eastern town. We saw an eastern marriage, which highly pleased us, illustrating the parables. It was by torch-light. We slept in the convent. 17th,—Spent morning in Rosetta: gave the monk a New Testament. Saw some of Egyptian misery in the bazaar. Saw the people praying in the mosque, Friday being the Moslem's day of devotion. In the evening we crossed the Nile in small boats. It is a fine river; and its water, when filtered, is sweet and pleasant. We often thought upon it in the desert. We slept that night on the sand, in our tents, by the sea-shore. 18th,—In six hours we came to Bourlos (you will see it in the map of the Society for Diffusing Useful Knowledge): were ferried across. Watched the fishermen casting their nets into the sea: hot—hot. In two hours more, through a palmy wilderness, we came to Balteen—'the Vale of Figs'—an Arab village of mud huts. You little know what an Arab house is. In general, in Egypt, it is an exact square box, made of mud, with a low hole for a door. The furniture is a mat and cooking things; an oven made of mud. 19th,—Spent our Sabbath unoccupied in midst of the village; the poor Arabs have no Sabbath. The thermometer 84° in tent. The governor called in the evening, and drank a cup of tea with great relish. The heat we felt much all day; still it was sweet to rest and remember you all in the wilderness. 20th,—At twelve at night, left Balteen by beautiful moonlight. Proceeding through a pleasant African wild of palms and brushwood, we reached the sea in two hours, and rode along, its waves washing our feet—very sleepy. We got a rest at midday, if rest it could be called, under that scorching sun, which I never will forget. Proceeding onward, at three o'clock we left the sea-shore, and perceived the minarets of Damietta. Before us the mirage cheated us often when we were very thirsty. We crossed the Nile again, a much smaller branch—the only remaining one—and soon found ourselves comfortably reclining on the divan of the British Consul, an Egyptian gentleman of some fortune and manners. He entertained us at supper in true Egyptian style; provided a roam for us, where we spread our mats in peace. We spent the whole of the next day here, having sent off a Bedouin to have camels ready for us at San. The Consul entertained us in the same Egyptian style of hospitality, and sent us away the next day on board a barge upon Lake Menzaleh. 22nd,—Even E—— would not have been afraid to sail upon that lake. It is nowhere more than ten feet deep, and in general only four or five. We made an awning with our mats, and spent a very happy day. At evening we entered a canal among immense reeds. In moonlight the scene was truly romantic: we slept moored to the shore all night. Next morning (23rd) we reached San about ten. This evening and next morning we spent in exploring the ruins of the ancient Zoan, for this we find is the very spot.

Wandering alone, we were quite surprised to find great mounds of brick, and pottery, and vitrified stone. Andrew at last came upon beautiful obelisks. Next morning we examined all carefully, and found two sphinxes and many Egyptian obelisks. How wonderful to be treading over the ruins of the ancient capital of Egypt! Isaiah 19:12, 'Where are the princes of Zoan? Ezekiel 30:14, 'God has set fire in Zoan.' This is the very place where Joseph was sold as a slave, and where Moses did his wonders; Psalms 78:43. This was almost the only place where we have been in danger from the inhabitants. They are a wild race; and our Arabs were afraid of them. You would have been afraid too, if you had seen, out of the door of our tent, our Bedouins keeping watch all night with their naked sabres gleaming in the moonlight, firing off their guns now and then, and keeping up a low chant to keep one another awake. No evil happened to us, and we feel that many pray for us, and that God is with us. 24th,—This day our journeyings on camels commenced, and

continued till we came to Jerusalem. It is a strange mode of conveyance. You have seen a camel kneeling; it is in this condition that you mount; suddenly it rises first on its fore feet, and then on its hind feet. It requires great skill to hold yourself on during this operation; one time I was thrown fair over its head, but quite unhurt. When you find yourself exalted on the hunch of a camel, it is somewhat of the feeling of an aeronaut, as if you were bidding farewell to sublunary things; but when he begins to move, with solemn pace and slow, you are reminded of your terrestrial origin, and that a wrong balance or turn to the side will soon bring you down from your giddy height. You have no stirrup, and generally only your bed for your saddle; you may either sit as on horseback, or as on a side-saddle—the latter is the pleasanter, though not the safer of the two. The camel goes about three miles an hour, and the step is so long that the motion is quite peculiar. You bend your head toward your knees every step. With a vertical sun above and a burning sand below, you may believe it is a very fatiguing mode of journeying. However, we thought of Rebecca and Abraham's servant (Genesis 24:1-67), and listened with delight to the wild Bedouins' plaintive song. That night, 24th, we slept at Menagie, a Bedouin mud village—palm trees and three wells, and an ocean of sand, formed the only objects of interest. 25th,—Up by sunrise, and proceeded as before. The only event this day was Dr. Black's fall from his camel, which greatly alarmed us. He had fallen asleep, which you are very apt to do; we encamped and used every restorative, so that we were able to proceed the same evening to Gonatre, a miserable Arab post, having a governor; not a tree. 26th—The Sabbath dawned sweetly; thermometer 92° in tent; could only lie on the mat and read Psalms. Evening—Gathered governor and Bedouins to hear some words of eternal life, Ibrahim interpreting. 27th,—Two very long stages brought us to Katieh; thankful to God for his goodness while we pitched by the date trees. 28th,—Spent the day at Katieh; interesting interviews with the governor, a kind Arab; thermometer 96° in tent. Same evening, proceeded through a greener desert, among flocks of goats and sheep, and encamped by a well, Bir-el-Abd. 29th,—Another hot day in the desert; came in sight of the sea, which gave us a refreshing breeze; bathed in a salt lake as hot as a warm-bath. Evening—Encampment at Abulgilbany. 30th,—This was our last day in the Egyptian wilderness. We entered on a much more mountainous region. The heat very great; we literally panted for a breath of wind. The Bedouins begged handkerchiefs to cover their heads, and often cast themselves under a bush for shade. Towards sunset, we came down to the old ruins of Rhinoculura, now buried in the sand; and soon after our camels kneeled down at the gates of El Arish, the last town on the Egyptian frontier. 31st,—We spent in El Arish, being unable to get fresh camels. We bought a sheep for five shillings; drank freely of their delightful water—What a blessing after the desert! Found out the river of Egypt, the boundary of Judah mentioned in the Bible, quite dry. 1st June,—Visited the school, a curiosity, all the children sit cross-legged on the floor, rocking to and fro, repeating something in Arabic. We had a curious interview with the governor, sitting in the gate in the ancient manner. We are quite expert now at taking off our shoes and sitting in the Eastern mode. Smoking, and coffee in very small cups, are the constant accompaniments of these visits. Left the same evening, and did not reach Sheikh Juidhe, in the land of the Philistines, till the sun was nearly bursting into view. 2nd,—Spent a happy Sabbath here; sung 'In Judah's land God is well known.' Singing praise in our tents is very sweet; they are so frail, like our mortal bodies; they rise easily into the ears of our present Father. Our journey through the land of the Philistines was truly pleasant. 3rd,—We went through a fine pasture country; immense straths; flocks of sheep and goats, and asses and camels, often came in sight. This is the very way up out of Egypt, little changed from the day that the Ethiopian went on

his way rejoicing, and Joseph and Mary carried down the babe from the anger of Herod. Little changed! did I say? it is all changed; no more is there one brook of water. Every river of Egypt Wady Gaza, Eshcol, Sorek—every brook we crossed, was dried up, not a drop of water. The land is changed; no more is it the rich land of Philistia. The sand struggles with the grass for mastery. The cities are changed—where are they? The people are changed—no more the bold Philistines—no more the children of Simeon—no more Isaac and his herdsmen—no more David and his horsemen; but miserable Arab shepherds—simple people, without ideas—poor, degraded, fearful. Khanounes was the first town we entered—Scripture name unknown. The burying-ground outside the town. The well, and people coming to draw, were objects of great interest to us. The people were highly entertained with us in return. We sat down in the bazaar, and were a spectacle to all. How much we longed to have the Arabic tongue, that we might preach the unsearchable riches of Christ in God's own land. Same evening, we heard the cry of the wolf, and encamped two miles from Gaza. The plague was raging, so we did not enter, but spent a delightful day in comparing its condition with God's word concerning it—'Baldness is come upon Gaza.' The old city is buried under sand-hills, without a blade of grass, so that it is bald indeed. The herds and flocks are innumerable, fulfilling Zephaniah 2:1-15; Andrew and I climbed the hill up which Samson carried the gates. 5th,—Passed through a fine olive grove for many miles, and entered the vale of Eshcol. The people were all in the fields cutting and bringing in their barley. They reap with the hook as we do. They seem to carry in at the same time upon camels. No vines in Eshcol now—no pomegranates; but some green fig-trees. Crossed the brook Sorek—dry. Spent the mid-day under the embowering shade of a fig-tree; tasted the apricots of the good land. Same evening we came to Doulis, which we take to be Eshtaol, where Samson was born. 6th,—We went due east, and, after a mountain pass, saw the hills of Judah—an immense plain intervening, all studded with little towns. From their names, we found out many Bible spots. This valley or plain is the very vale of Zephatha, of which you read in 2 Chronicles 14:1-15—'in the plain of Sephela.' Before night we entered among the hills of Judah—very like our own Highlands—and slept all night among the mountains, at a deserted village called Latroon. 7th,—One of the most privileged days of our life. We broke up our tents by moonlight; soon the sun was up; we entered a defile of the most romantic character; wild rocks and verdant hills—wild flowers of every color and fragrance scented our path. Sometimes we came upon a clump of beautiful olive trees, then wild again. The turtle's voice was heard in the land, and singing birds of sweetest note. Our camels carried us up this pass for four hours; and our turbaned Bedouins added by their strange figures to the scene. The terracing of all, the hills is the most remarkable feature of Judean scenery. Every foot of the rockiest mountains may, in this way, be covered with vines. We thought of Isaiah wandering here, and David and Solomon. Still all was wilderness. The hand of man had been actively employed upon every mountain, but where were these laborers now? Judah is gone into captivity before the enemy. There are few men left in the land; not a vine is there. 'The vine languisheth.' We came down upon Garieh, a village embosomed in figs and pomegranates. Ascending again, we came down into the valley of Elah, where David slew Goliath. Another long and steep ascent of a most rugged hill, brought us into a strange scene—a desert of sunburnt rocks. I had read of this, and knew that Jerusalem was near. I left my camel and went before, hurrying over the burning rocks. In about half an hour Jerusalem came in sight. 'How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people!' Is this the perfection of beauty? 'How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger!' It is, indeed, very desolate. Read the two first chapters of Lamentations, and

you have a vivid picture of our first sight of Jerusalem. We lighted off our camels within the Jaffa gate. Among those that crowded round us, we observed several Jews. I think I had better not attempt to tell you about Jerusalem. There is so much to describe, and I know not where to begin, The Consul, Mr. Young, received us most kindly, provided us a house where we might spread our mats, and helped us in every way, Mr. Nicolayson called the same evening and insisted on our occupying one of the mission-houses on Mount Zion, The plague is still in Jerusalem, so that we must keep ourselves in quarantine. The plague only communicates by contact, so that we are not allowed to touch any one, or let any one touch us. Every night we heard the mourners going about the streets with their dismal wailings for the dead. On Sabbath Mr. Nicolayson read the prayers, and Dr. Black preached from Isaiah 2:2. Dr. Keith in the evening. Three converted Jews were among the hearers. On Monday 10th, we visited the Sepulcher, and a painful sight, where we can find no traces of Calvary. Same evening rode up to the Mount of Olives; past Gethsemane, a most touching spot. Visited Sir Moses Montefiore, a Jew of London, encamped on Mount Olivet; very kind to us. 11th,—Went round the most of the places to be visited near Jerusalem—Rephaim, Gihon, Siloa's Brook 'that flowed fast by the Oracle of God'; the Pool of Siloam—the place where Jesus wept over the city; Bethany—of all places my favorite—the tombs of the Kings. Such a day we never spent in this world before. The climate is truly delightful—hot at mid-day, but delightful breezes at morn and even. 12th,—A business day, getting information about Jews. In the evening, walked to Aceldama—a dreadful spot. Zion is ploughed like a field. I gathered some barley, and noticed cauliflowers, planted in rows. See Micah 3:12. Jerusalem is, indeed, heaps. The quantities of rubbish would amaze you—in one place higher than the walls, 13th,—We went to Hebron, twenty miles south; Mr. Nicolayson, his son, the Consul, and ladies accompanying us, a11 on mules and horses. Judah's cities are all waste. Except Bethlehem, we saw none but ruins till we reached Hebron. The vines are beautifully cultivated here, and make it a Paradise. The hills all terraced to the top. We spent a delightful evening and all next day. We met the Jews and had an interesting interview with them. We read Genesis xviii., and many other Bible passages, with great joy. Saw the mosque where the tomb of Abraham and Sarah is. 14th,—Returned by Bethlehem to Jerusalem. Bethlehem is a sweet village, placed on the top of a rocky hill—very white and dazzling. You see it on both sides of the hill. At Rachel's sepulcher you see Jerusalem on one hand and Bethlehem on the other, an interesting sight—six miles apart. On Sabbath we enjoyed the Lord's Supper in an upper chamber in Jerusalem. It was a time much to be remembered. Andrew preached in the evening from John 14:2-3. 17th,—The plague has been increasing so that we think it better to depart. Last visit to Gethsemane, and Bethany, and Siloam. Evening,-Took farewell of all our friends in Jerusalem, with much sorrow you may believe. Went due north to Ramah, by Gibeon, and slept at Beer, again in our tent, in Benjamin. 19th,—Passed Bethel where Jacob slept. Passed through the rich and rocky defile of Ephraim, by Lebonah, to Sychar. You cannot believe what a delightsome land it is. We sought anxiously for the well where Jesus sat. Andrew alone found it, and lost his Bible in it. 20th,—Had a most interesting morning with the Jews at Sychar. Saw many of them; also the Samaritans, in their synagogue. Same evening visited Samaria., a wonderful place, and encamped at Sanor. 21st,—Arrived at Carmel, where we now are, encamped within two yards of the sea. We have been in quarantine here seven days, as there is no plague north of this. Several English are encamped here—Lord R., Lord H., &c. We have daily conversations sitting on the sand. We are not allowed to touch even the rope of a tent. Acre is in sight across the bay. We have delightful bathing. Tomorrow Lord H. leaves, and kindly offers

to take this. Carmel's rocky brow is over us. We are all well and happy. On Monday, we propose leaving for Tiberias and Saphet. Soon we shall be in Beyrout, and on our way to Smyrna. Do not be anxious for me. Trust us to God, who goes with us where we go. I only pray that our mission may be blessed to Israel. Sir Moses M. has arrived, and pitched his tent within fifty yards of us. Kindest regards to all that inquire after me, not forgetting dear W.—Your affectionate son, &c. When the two elder brethren of the deputation left us for Europe, we turned southward again from Beyrout, to visit the regions of Phoenicia and Galilee. Never did Mr. M'Cheyne seem more gladsome than in gazing on these regions. At Tyre, he remembered the request of an elder in the parish of Larbert, who had written to him before his departure, stating what he considered to be a difficulty in the ordinary expositions of the prophecies which speak of that renowned city. With great delight, he examined the difficulty on the spot; and it is believed that his testimony on such points as these, when it reached some men of skeptical views in that scene of his early labours, was not unblest. From Saphet he writes:—"I sat looking down upon the Lake this morning for about an hour. It was just at our feet—the very water where Jesus walked, where he called his disciples, where he rebuked the storm, where he said, 'Children, have ye any meat?' after he rose from the dead. Jesus is the same still." To his early and familiar friend, Mr. Somerville, he thus describes the same view:—"O what a view of the Sea of Galilee is before you, at your feet! It is above three hours' descent to the water's edge, and yet it looks as if you could run down in as many minutes. The lake is much larger than I had imagined. It is hemmed in by mountains on every side, sleeping as calmly and softly as if it had been the sea of glass which John saw in heaven. We tried in vain to follow the course of the Jordan running through it. True, there were clear lines, such as you see in the wake of a vessel, but then these did not go straight through the lake. The hills of Bashan are very high and steep, where they run into the lake. At one point, a man pointed out to us where the tombs in the rocks are, where the demoniacs used to live; and near it the hills were exactly what the Scriptures describe, 'a steep place,' where the swine ran down into the sea. On the north-east of the sea, Hermon rises very grand, intersected with many ravines full of snow." The day we spent at the lake—at the very water-side—was ever memorable; it was so peculiarly sweet. We felt an indescribable interest even in lifting a shell from the shore of a sea where Jesus had so often walked. It was here that two of the beautiful hymns in "The Songs of ‚Zion" were suggested to him. The one was, "How pleasant to me," &c., the other, "To yonder side"; but the latter lay beside him unfinished till a later period. His complaint was now considerably abated; his strength seemed returning; and often did he long to be among his people again, though quieting his soul upon the Lord. Not a few pastors of another church, have, from time to time, come forth to this land, compelled by disease to seek for health in foreign regions; but how rarely do we find the pastor's heart retained—how rarely do we discover that the shepherd yearns still over the flock he left. But so deep were Mr. M'Cheyne's feelings toward the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made him overseer, that his concern for them became a temptation to his soul. It was not in the mere desire to preach again that he manifested this concern; for this desire might have been selfish, as he said—"No doubt there is pride in this anxiety to preach; a submissive soul would rejoice only in doing the present will of God." But his prayers for them went up daily to the throne. We had precious sessions of united prayer also for that same end—especially one morning at sunrise in Gethsemane, and another morning at Carmel, where we joined in supplication on the silent shore at the foot of the hill as soon as day dawned, and then again at evening on the top, where Elijah prayed.

Distance of place, or peculiarities of circumstances, never altered his views of duty, nor changed his feelings as a minister of Christ. In Galilee he meditated upon the aspect of ecclesiastical affairs in our beloved Scotland, and the principles he had maintained appeared to him as plainly accordant with the Word of God when tried there, apart from excitement, as they did when he reviewed them in connection with their effect at home. "I hope," were his words to a brother in the ministry, ‘I hope the Church has been well guided and blessed; and if times of difficulty are to come, I do believe there is no position so proper for her to be in, as the attitude of a missionary church, giving freely to Jew and Gentile, as she has freely received—so may she be found when the Lord comes." At the foot of Lebanon, in the town of Beyrout, he was able to expound a chapter (Acts 10:1-48) at a prayer-meeting of the American brethren. This quite rejoiced his heart; for it seemed as if the Lord were restoring him, and meant again to use him in preaching the glad tidings. But shortly after, during the oppressive heat of the afternoon, he felt himself unwell. He had paid a visit to a young man from Glasgow in the town, who was ill of fever; and it is not unlikely that this visit, at a time when he was in a state of debility from previous fatigue, was the immediate occasion of his own illness. He was very soon prostrated under the fever. But his medical attendant apprehended no danger, and advised him to proceed to Smyrna, in the belief that the cool air of the sea would be much more in his favor than the sultry heat of Beyrout. Accordingly, in company with our faithful Hebrew friend, Erasmus Calman, we embarked; but as we lay off Cyprus, the fever increased to such a height, that he lost his memory for some hours, and was racked with excessive pain in his head. When the vessel sailed, he revived considerably, but during three days no medical aid could be obtained. He scarcely ever spoke; and only once did he for a moment, on a Saturday night, lift his languid eye, as he lay on deck enjoying the breeze, to catch a distant sight of Patmos. We watched him with agonizing anxiety till we reached Smyrna and the village of Bouja. Though three miles off, yet for the sake of medical aid he rode to this village upon a mule after sunset, ready to drop every moment with pain and burning fever. But here the Lord had prepared for him the best and kindest help. The tender and parental care of Mr. and Mrs. Lewis, in whose house he found a home, was never mentioned by him but with deepest gratitude; and the sight of the flowering Jessamine, or the mention of the deep-green cypress, would invariably call up in his mind associations of Bouja and its inmates. He used to say it was his second birth-place.

During that time, like most of God’s people who have been in sickness, he felt that a single passage of the Word of God was more truly food to his fainting soul than anything besides. One day his spirit revived, and his eye glistened, when I spoke of the Savior’s sympathy, adducing as the very words of Jesus, Psalms 41:1—"Blessed is he that considereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble," &c. It seemed so applicable to his own case, as a minister of the glad tidings; for often had he "considered the poor," carrying a cup of cold water to a disciple. Another passage, written for the children of God in their distress, was spoken to him when he seemed nearly insensible—"Call upon me in the day of trouble." This word of God was as the drop of honey to Jonathan.

He himself thus spoke of his illness to his friends at home:—"I left the foot of Lebanon when I could hardly see, or hear, or speak, or remember; I felt my faculties going, one by one, and I had every reason to expect that I would soon be with my God. It is a sore trial to be alone and dying, in a foreign land, and it has made me feel, in a way that I never knew before, the necessity of having

unfeigned faith in Jesus and in God. Sentiments, natural feelings, glowing fancies of divine things, will not support the soul in such an hour. There is much self-delusion in our estimation of ourselves when we are untried and in the midst of Christian friends, whose warm feelings give a glow to ours, which they do not possess in themselves." Even then he had his people in his heart. "When I got better, I used to creep out in the evenings about sunset. I often remembered you all then. I could not write, as my eyes and head were much affected; I could read but very little; I could speak very little, for I had hardly any voice; and so I had all my time to lay my people before God, and pray for a blessing on them. About the last evening I was there, we all went to the vintage, and I joined in gathering the grapes." To Mr. Somerville he wrote:—"My mind was very weak when I was at the worst, and therefore the things of eternity were often dim. I had no fear to die, for Christ had died. Still I prayed for recovery, if it was the Lord's will. You remember you told me to be humble among your last advices. You see God is teaching me the same thing. I fear I am not thoroughly humbled. I feel the pride of my heart, and bewail it." To his kind medical friend Dr. Gibson, in Dundee, he wrote:—"I really believed that my Master had called me home, and that I would sleep beneath the dark green cypresses of Bouja till the Lord shall come, and they that sleep in Jesus come with him; and my most earnest prayer was for my dear flock, that God would give them a pastor after his own heart." When we met, after an eight days' separation, on board the vessel at Constantinople, he mentioned as one of the most interesting incidents of the week, that one evening, while walking with Mr. Lewis, they met a young Greek and his wife, both of whom were believed to be really converted souls. It created a thrill in his bosom to meet with these almost solitary representatives of the once-faithful and much-tried native Church of Smyrna.

Meanwhile there were movements at home that proved the Lord to be he who "alone doeth wondrous things." The cry of his servant in Asia was not forgotten; the eye of the Lord turned towards his people. It was during the time of Mr. M'Cheyne's sore sickness that his flock in Dundee were receiving blessing from the opened windows of heaven. Their pastor was lying at the gate of death, in utter helplessness. But the Lord had done this on very purpose; for he meant to show that he needed not the help of any: he could send forth new laborers, and work by new instruments, when it pleased him. We little knew that during the days when we were waiting at the foot of Lebanon for a vessel to carry us to Smyrna, the arm of the Lord had begun to be revealed in Scotland. On the 23rd of July the great Revival at Kilsyth took place.

Mr. W. C. Burns, the same who was supplying Mr. M'Cheyne's place in his absence, was on that day preaching to his father's flock; and while pressing upon them immediate acceptance of Christ with deep solemnity, the whole of the vast assembly were overpowered. The Holy Spirit seemed to come down as a rushing mighty wind, and to fill the place. Very many were that day struck to the heart; the sanctuary was filled with distressed and enquiring souls. All Scotland heard the glad news that the sky was no longer as brass—that the rain had begun to fall. The Spirit in mighty power began to work from that day forward in many places of the land.

Mr. Burns returned to Mr. M'Cheyne's flock on August 8th—one of the days when Mr. M'Cheyne was stretched on his bed, praying for his people under all his own suffering. The news of the work at Kilsyth had produced a deep impression in Dundee; and two days after, the Spirit began to work in St Peter's, at the time of the prayer-meeting in the church, in a way similar to Kilsyth. Day after day, the people met for prayer and hearing the Word; and the times of the Apostles seemed returned, when "the Lord added to the Church daily of such as should be saved." All this time, Mr.

M’Cheyne knew not how gracious the Lord had been in giving him his heart’s desire. It was not till we were within sight of home, that the glad news of these Revivals reached our ears. But he continued like Epaphras, "laboring fervently in prayer," and sought daily to prepare himself for a more efficient discharge of his office, should the Lord restore him to it again. He sends home this message to a fellow-laborer: "Do not forget to carry on the work in hearts brought to a Saviour. I feel this was one of my faults in the ministry. Nourish babes; comfort downcast believers; counsel those perplexed; perfect that which is lacking in their faith. Prepare them for sore trials. I fear most Christians are quite unready for days of darkness." (Mr. Moody Stuart.) Our journey led us through Moldavia, Wallachia, and Austria—lands of darkness and of the shadow of death. Profound strangers to the truth as it is in Jesus, the people of these lands, nevertheless, profess to be Christians. Superstition and its idolatries veil the glorious Object of faith from every eye. In these regions, as well as in those already traversed, Mr. M’Cheyne’s anxiety for souls appeared in the efforts he made to leave at least a few words of Scripture with the Jews whom we met, however short the time of our interview. His spirit was stirred in him; and, with his Hebrew Bible in his hand, he would walk up thoughtfully and solemnly to the first Jew he could get access to, and begin by calling the man’s attention to some statement of God’s Word. In Palestine, if the Jew did not understand Italian, he would repeat to him such texts in Hebrew as, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David," &c (Zechariah 13:1). And one evening, at the well of Doulis, when the Arab population were all clustered round the water troughs, he looked on very wistfully, and said, "If only we had Arabic, we might sow beside all waters!" At Jassy, after a deeply interesting day spent in conversation with Jews who came to the inn, he said, "I will remember the faces of those men at the judgment-seat." When he came among the more educated Jews of Europe, he rejoiced to find that they could converse with him in Latin. His heart was bent on doing what he could (Mark 14:8) in season and out of season. "One thing," he writes, "I am deeply convinced of, that God can make the simplest statement of the gospel effectual to save souls. If only it be the true gospel, the good tidings, the message that God loved the world, and provided a ransom free to all, then God is able to make it-wound the heart, and heal it too. There is deep meaning in the words of Paul, ‘I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.’" The abominations of Popery witnessed in Austrian Poland, called forth many a prayer for the destruction of the Man of Sin. "The images and idols by the wayside are actually frightful, stamping the whole land as a kingdom of darkness. I do believe that a journey through Austria would go far to cure some of the Popery-admirers of our beloved land." He adds—"These are the marks of the beast upon this land." And in like manner our privileges in Scotland used to appear to him the more precious, when, as at Brody, we heard of Protestants who were supplied with sermon only once a year. "I must tell this to my people," said he, "when I return, to make them prize their many seasons of grace."

He estimated the importance of a town or country by its relation to the house of Israel; and his yearnings over these lost sheep resembled his bowels of compassion for his flock at home. At Tarnapol, in Galicia, he wrote home—"We are in Tarnapol, a very nice clean town, prettily situated on a winding stream, with wooded hills around. I suppose you never heard its name before; neither did I till we were there among Jews. I know not whether it has been the birthplace of warriors, or poets, or orators; its flowers have hitherto been born to blush unseen, at least by us barbarians of the north; but if God revive the dry bones of Israel that are scattered over the world, there will arise from this place an exceeding great army." Our friend and brother in the faith, Erasmus Calman,

lightened the tediousness of a long day’s journey, by repeating to us some Hebrew poetry. One piece was on Israel’s present state of degradation; it began—

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■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ As the vehicle drove along, we translated it line by line, and soon after Mr. M’Cheyne put it into verse. The following lines are a part:—

Rock and Refuge of my soul, Swiftly let the season roll, When thine Israel shall arise Lovely in the nations’ eyes!

Lord of glory, Lord of might, As our ransomed fathers tell;

Once more for thy people fight, Plead for thy loved Israel.

Give our spoilers’ towers to be Waste and desolate as we.

Hasten, Lord, the joyful year, When thy Zion, tempest-tossed, Shall the silver trumpet hear;

Bring glad tidings to the lost!

Captive, cast thy cords from thee, Loose thy neck—be free—be free!

Why dost thou behold our sadness?

See the proud have torn away All our years of solemn gladness, When thy flock kept holy-day!

Lord, thy fruitful vine is bare, Not one gleaning grape is there!

Rock and Refuge of my soul, Swiftly let the season roll, When thine Israel shall be, Once again, beloved and free!

In his notes, he has one or two subjects marked for hymns. One of these is—Isaiah 2:3—"Come ye," &c., a loving call to the Jews. Another is to the same effect—Isaiah 1:15—"Come, let us reason together." But these he never completed. In Cracow, having heard of the death of a friend, the wife of an English clergyman, in the midst of her days and in the full promise of usefulness, he began to pen a few sweet lines of comfort.

Oft as she taught the little maids of France To leave the garland, castanet, and dance, And listen to the words which she would say About the crowns that never fade away, A new expression kindled in her eye, A holy brightness borrowed from the sky. And when returning to her native land, She bowed beneath a Father’s chast’ning hand; When the quick pulse and flush upon the cheek, A touching warning to her friends would speak, A holy cheerfulness yet filled her eye, Willing she was to live, wilting to die. As the good Shunammite (the Scriptures tell), When her son died, said meekly, "It is well," So when Sophia lost her infant boy, And felt how dear-bought is a mother’s joy, When with green turf the little grave she spread, "Not lost, but gone before;" she meekly said. And now they sleep together ‘neath the willow, The same dew drops upon their silent pillow.

Return, O mourner, from this double grave, And praise the God who all her graces gave.

Follow her faith, and let her mantle be A cloak of holy zeal to cover thee. The danger which he incurred from the shepherds in this region, and other similar perils to which he was exposed in company with others, have been recorded in the Narrative. Out of them all the Lord delivered him; and not from these perils only did he save him, but from many severe trials to his health, to which variety of climate and discomforts of accommodation subjected him. And now we were traversing Prussia, drawing nearer our own land. It was about five months since we had received letters from Scotland, our route having led us away from places which we had anticipated visiting, and where communications had been left for us. We pressed homeward somewhat anxiously, yet wondering often at past mercies. In a letter from Berlin, Mr. M'Cheyne remarked, "Our heavenly Father has brought us through so many trials and dangers that I feel persuaded he will yet carry us to the end. Like John, we shall fulfill our course. 'Are there not twelve hours in the day?' Are we not all immortal till our work is done! " His strength was rapidly increasing; the journey had answered the ends anticipated to a great extent, in his restoration to health. He was able to preach at Hamburg to the English congregation of Mr. Rheder, from whom it was that the first hint of a Revival in Dundee reached his ears. He heard just so much both of Kilsyth and Dundee as to make him long to hear more. A few days after, on board the vessel that conveyed us to England, he thus expressed his feelings:—

Sailing up the Thames, Nov. 6, 1839. MY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER, YOU will be glad to see by the date that we are once more in sight of the shores of happy England. I only wish I knew how you all are. I have not heard of you since I was in Smyrna. In vain did I enquire for letters from you at Cracow, Berlin, and Hamburg. You must have written to Warsaw, and the Resident there has not returned them to Berlin, as we desired. Andrew and I and Mr. Calman are all quite well, and thankful to God, who has brought us through every danger in so many countries. I trust our course has not been altogether fruitless, and that we may now resign our commission with some hope of good issuing from it to the Church and to Israel. I preached last Sabbath in Hamburg, for the first time since leaving England, and felt nothing the worse of it; so that I do hope it is my heavenly Father's will to restore me to usefulness again among my beloved flock. We have heard something of a reviving work at Kilsyth. We saw it noticed in one of the newspapers. I also saw the name of Dundee associated with it; so that I earnestly hope good has been doing in our Church, and the dew from on high watering our parishes, and that the flocks whose pastors have been wandering may also have shared in the blessing. We are quite ignorant of the facts, and you may believe we are anxious to hear...We are now passing Woolwich, and in an hour will be in London. We are anxious to be home, but I suppose will not get away till next week. I never thought to have seen you again in this world, but now I hope to meet you once more in peace.—Believe me, your affectionate Son, &c. The day we arrived on the shores of our own land was indeed a singular day. We were intensely anxious to hear of events that had occurred at home a few months before—the outpouring of the Spirit from on high—while our friends were intensely interested in hearing tidings of the Land of Israel and the scattered tribes. The reception of the deputation on their return, and the fruits of their mission, are well known, and have been elsewhere recorded.

Mr. M'Cheyne listened with deepest interest to the accounts given of what had taken place in Dundee during the month of August, when he lay at the gates of death in Bouja. The Lord had indeed fulfilled his hopes, and answered his prayers. His assistant, Mr. Burns, had been honored of God to open the flood-gate at Dundee, as well as at Kilsyth. For some time before, Mr. Burns

had seen symptoms of deeper attention than usual, and of real anxiety in some that had hitherto been careless. But it was after his return from Kilsyth that the people began to melt before the Lord. On Thursday, the second day after his return, at the close of the usual evening prayer-meeting in St. Peter's, and when the minds of many were deeply solemnized by the tidings which had reached them, he spoke a few words about what had for some days detained him from them, and invited those to remain who felt the need of an outpouring of the Spirit to convert them. About a hundred remained; and at the conclusion of a solemn address to these anxious souls, suddenly the power of God seemed to descend, and all were bathed in tears. At a similar meeting, next evening, in the church, there was much melting of heart and intense desire after the Beloved of the Father; and on adjourning to the vestry, the arm of the Lord was revealed. No sooner was the vestry-door opened to admit those who might feel anxious to converse, than a vast number pressed in with awful eagerness. It was like a pent-up flood breaking forth; tears were streaming from the eyes of many, and some fell on the ground groaning, and weeping, and crying for mercy. Onward from that evening, meetings were held every day for many weeks; and the extraordinary nature of the work justified and called for extraordinary services. The whole town was moved. Many believers doubted; the ungodly raged; but the Word of God grew mightily and prevailed. Instances occurred where whole families were affected at once, and each could be found mourning apart, affording a specimen of the times spoken of by Zechariah (Zechariah 12:12). Mr. Baxter of Hilltown, Mr. Hamilton, then assistant at Abernyte, and other men of God in the vicinity, hastened to aid in the work. Mr. Roxburgh of St. John's, and Mr. Lewis of St David's, examined the work impartially and judiciously, and testified it to be of God. Dr. M'Donald of Ferintosh, a man of God well experienced in Revivals, came to the spot and put to his seal also; and continued in town, preaching in St. David's Church to the anxious multitudes, during ten days. How many of those who were thus awfully awakened were really brought to the truth, it was impossible to ascertain. When Mr. M'Cheyne arrived, drop after drop was still falling from the clouds.

Such in substance were the accounts he heard before he reached Dundee. They were such as made his heart rejoice. He had no envy at another instrument having been so honored in the place where he himself had laboured with many tears and temptations. In true Christian magnanimity, he rejoiced that the work of the Lord was done, by whatever hand Full of praise and wonder, he set his foot once more on the shore of Dundee.

ENDNOTES:

[1] It is a somewhat curious occurrence, that the remnants of this Bible were found, and drawn up from the bottom of the well, in July 1843, by Dr. Wilson, and his fellow-traveler, who employed a Samaritan from Sychar to descend and examine the well.

[2] He alludes here to the decision of the House of Lords in the Auchterarder case.

04.05. Days of Revival

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CHAPTER 5

Days of Revival They shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. Isaiah 44:4 His people, who had never ceased to pray for him, welcomed his arrival among them with the greatest joy. He reached Dundee on a Thursday afternoon; and in the evening of the same day, being the usual time for prayer in St. Peter's, after a short meditation, he hastened to the church, there to give thanks to the Lord, and to speak once more to his flock. The appearance of the church that evening, and the aspect of the people, he never could forget. Many of his brethren were present to welcome him, and to hear the first words of his opened lips. There was not a seat in the church unoccupied, the aisles were completely filled, and the stairs up to the pulpit were crowded, on the one side with the aged, on the other with eagerly listening children. Many faces were seen anxiously gazing on their restored pastor; many were weeping under the unhealed wounds of conviction; all were still and calm, intensely earnest to hear. He read Psalms 66:1-20; and the manner of singing, which had been extraordinary since the revival began, appeared to him peculiarly sweet-"so tender and affecting, as if the people felt that they were praising a present God." After solemn prayer with them, he was able to preach for above an hour. Not knowing how long he might be permitted to proclaim the glad tidings, he seized that opportunity, not to tell of his journeyings, but to show the way of life to sinners. His text was 1 Corinthians 2:1-4-the matter, the manner, and the accompaniments of Paul's preaching. It was a night to be remembered. On coming out of the church, he found the road to his house crowded with old and young, who were waiting to welcome him back. He had to shake hands with many at the same time; and before this happy multitude would disperse, had to speak some words of life to them again, and pray with them where they stood. "To thy name, 0 Lord," he said that night, when he returned to his home, "To thy name, 0 Lord, be all the glory!" A month later, he was visited by one who had up to this time stood out against all the singular influence of the revival, but who that night was deeply awakened under his words, so that the arrow festered in her soul, until she came crying, "Oh my hard, hard heart!" On the Sabbath he preached to his flock in the afternoon. He chose 2 Chronicles 5:13-14, as his text, and at the close, his hearers remember well how affectionately and solemnly he said: "Dearly beloved and longed for, I now begin another year of my ministry among you; and I am resolved, if God give me health and strength, that I will not let a man, woman, or child among you alone, until you have at least heard the testimony of God concerning His Son, either to your condemnation or salvation. And I will pray, as I have done before, that if the Lord will indeed give us a great outpouring of His Spirit, He will do it in such a way that it will be evident to the weakest child among you that it is the Lord's work, and not man's. I think I may say to you, as Rutherford said to his people, `Your heaven would be two heavens to me.' And if the Lord be pleased to give me a crown from among you, I do here promise in His sight, that I will cast it at His feet, saying 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain! Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb forever and ever.'"

It was much feared for a time that a jealous spirit would prevail among the people of St. Peter's, some saying, "I am of Paul; and others, I of Cephas." Those recently converted were apt to regard their spiritual father in a light in which they could regard none besides. But Mr. McCheyne had received from the Lord a holy disinterestedness that suppressed every feeling of envy. Many wondered at the single-heartedness he was able to exhibit. He could sincerely say, "I have no desire but the salvation of my people, by whatever instrument."

Never, perhaps, was there one placed in better circumstances for testing the revival impartially, and seldom has any revival been more fully tested. He came among a people whose previous character he knew; he found a work wrought among them during his absence, in which he had not had any direct part; he returned home to go out and in among them, and to be a close observer of all that had taken place; and after a faithful and prayerful examination, he did most unhesitatingly say that the Lord had wrought great things, whereof he was glad; and in the case of many of those whose souls were saved in that revival, he discovered remarkable answers to his prayers, and of those who had come to the truth before he left them. He wrote to me his impressions of the work, when he had been among his people a few weeks:

Dec. 2, 1839 "Rev. And. A. Bonar, Collace.

"MY DEAR A. -I begin upon note-paper, because I have no other on hand but our thin travelling paper. I have much to tell you, and to praise the Lord for. I am grieved to hear that there are no marks of the Spirit's work about Collace during your absence; but if Satan drive you to your knees, he will soon find cause to repent it. Remember how fathers do to their children when they ask bread. How much more shall our heavenly Father give all good things to them that ask Him. Remember the rebuke which I once got from old Mr. Dempster of Denny, after preaching to his people: 'I was highly pleased with your discourse, but in prayer it struck me that you thought

God unwilling to give.' Remember Daniel: 'At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth.' And do not think you are forgotten by me as long as I have health and grace to pray.

"Everything here I have found in a state better than I expected. The night I arrived I preached to such a congregation as I never saw before. I do not think another person could have got into the church, and there was every sign of the deepest and tenderest emotion. R. Macdonald was with me, and prayed. Affliction and success in the ministry have taught and quickened him. I preached on 1 Corinthians 2:1-4, and felt what I have often heard, that it is easy to preach where the Spirit of God is. On the Friday night Mr. Burns preached. On the Sabbath I preached on that wonderful passage, 2 Chronicles 5:13-14; Mr. Burns preached twice, morning and evening. His views of divine truth are clear and commanding. There is a great deal of substance in what he preaches, and his manner is very powerful-so much so, that he sometimes made me tremble. In private he is deeply prayerful, and seems to feel his danger of falling into pride.

"I have seen many of the awakened, and many of the saved; indeed, this is a pleasant place compared with what it was once. Some of the awakened are still in the deepest anxiety and distress. Their great error is exactly what your brother Horace told me. They think that coming to Christ is some strange act of their mind, different from believing what God has said of His Son; so much so, that they will tell you with one breath, I believe all that God has said, and yet with the next complain that they cannot come to Christ, or close with Christ. It is very hard to deal with this

delusion.

"I find some old people deeply shaken; they feel insecure. One confirmed drunkard has come to me, and is, I believe, now a saved man. Some little children are evidently saved. All that I have yet seen are related to converts of my own. One, eleven years old, is a singular instance of divine grace. When I asked if she desired to be made holy, she said, 'Indeed, I often wish I was away, that I might sin nae mair.' A. L., of fifteen, is a fine tenderhearted believer. W .S., ten, is also a happy boy.

"Many of my own dear children in the Lord are much advanced; much more full of joy-their hearts lifted up in the ways of the Lord. I have found many more savingly impressed under my own ministry than I knew of. Some have come to tell me. In one case a whole family saved. I have hardly met with anything to grieve me. Surely the Lord hath dealt bountifully with me. I fear, however, that the great Spirit has in some measure passed by-I hope soon to return in greater power than ever. The week meetings are thinner now. I will turn two of them into my classes soon, and so give solid, regular instruction, of which they stand greatly in need. I have not met with one case of extravagance or false fire, although doubtless there may be many. At first they used to follow in a body to our house, and expected many an address and prayer by the road. They have given up this now. I preached last Sabbath twice, first on Isaiah 28:14-18, and then on Revelation 12:11, 'Overcame by the blood of the Lamb.' It was a very solemn day. The people willingly sat till it was dark. Many make it a place of Bochim. Still there is nothing of the power which has been. I have tried to persuade Mr. Burns to stay with us, and I think he will remain in Dundee. I feel fully stronger in body than when I left you. Instead of exciting me, there is everything to solemnize and still my feelings. Eternity sometimes seems very near.

"I would like your advice about prayer meetings; how to consolidate them; what rules should be followed, if any; whether there should be mere reading of the word and prayer, or free converse also on the passage? We began today a ministerial prayer meeting, to be held every Monday at eleven, for an hour and a half. This is a great comfort, and may be a great blessing. Of course we do not invite the colder ministers; that would only damp our meeting. Tell me if you think this right.

"And now, dear A., I must be done, for it is very late. May your people share in the quickening that has come over Dundee! I feel it a very powerful argument with many: `Will you be left dry when others are getting drops of heavenly dew?' My this with your people.

"I think it probable we shall have another communion again before the regular one. It seems very desirable. You will come and help us; and perhaps Horace too.

"I thought of coming back by Collace from Errol, if our Glasgow meeting had not come in the way.

"Will you set agoing your Wednesday meeting again, immediately?

"Farewell, dear A. 'Oh man, greatly beloved, fear not; peace be to thee; be strong; yea, be strong.' Yours ever." To Mr. Burns he thus expresses himself on December 19: "MY DEAR BROTHER-I shall never be able to thank you for all your labors among the precious souls committed to me; and what is worse, I can never thank God fully for His kindness and grace, which every day appear to me more remarkable. He has answered prayer to me in all that has happened in a way which I have never told any one." Again, on the 31st: "Stay where you are, dear brother, as long as the

Lord has any work for you to do.(Mr. Burns was at the time in Perth, and there had begun to be some movement among the dry bones.)

’ If I know my own heart, its only desire is that Christ may be glorified, by souls flocking to Him, and abiding in Him, and reflecting His image; and whether it be in Perth or Dundee, should signify little to us. You know I told you my mind plainly, that I thought the Lord had so blessed you in Dundee, that you were called to a fuller and deeper work there; but if the Lord accompanies you to other places, I have nothing to object. The Lord strengthened my body and soul last Sabbath, and my spirit also was glad. The people were much alive in the Lord’s service. But oh! dear brother, the most are Christless still. The rich are almost untroubled. " His evidence for this is given fully in his answers to the queries put by a Committee of the Aberdeen Presbytery; and in a note to a friend, he incidentally mentions a pleasing result of this widespread awakening: "I find many souls saved under my own ministry, whom I never knew of before. They are not afraid to come out now, it has become so common a thing to be concerned about the soul." At that time, also, many came from a distance; one came from the north, who had been in deep distress of soul a year, to seek Christ in Dundee. In his brief diary he records, on December 3, that twenty anxious souls had that night been conversing with him; "many of them very deeply interesting." He occasionally set an evening for the purpose of meeting with those who were awakened; and in one of his notebooks there are a least four hundred visits recorded, made to him by inquiring souls, in the course of that and the following years. He observed that those who had been believers formerly had got their hearts enlarged, and were greatly established in the faith; and some seemed able to feed upon the truth in a new manner-as when one related to him how there had for some time appeared a blessing in the reading of the Word in public, quite different from reading it alone. At the same time he saw backsliding, both among those whom believers had considered really converted, and among those who had been deeply convicted, though never considered among the really saved. He notes in his book: "Called to see-. Poor lad, he seems to have gone back from Christ, led away by evil company. And yet I felt sure of him at one time. What blind creatures ministers are! man looketh at the outward appearance." One morning he was visited by one of his flock, proposing "a concert for prayer on the following Monday, in behalf of those who had fallen back, that God’s Spirit might re-awaken them,"-so observant were the believers as well as their pastor of declensions. Among those who were awakened, but never truly converted, he mentions one case. "Jan. 9, 1840-Met with the case of one who had been frightened during the late work, so that her bodily health was injured. She seems to have no care now about her soul. It has only filled her mouth with evil-speaking." That many, who promised much, drew back and walked no more with Jesus, is true. Out of about 800 souls who, during the months of the revival, conversed with different ministers in apparent anxiety, it is no wonder that many proved to have been impressed only for a time. President Edwards considered it likely that, in such cases, the proportion of real conversions might resemble the proportion of blossoms in spring, and fruit in autumn. Nor can anything be more unreasonable than to doubt the truth of all, because of the deceit of some. The world itself does not so act in judging of its own. The world considers the possibility of being mistaken in many cases, and yet does not cease to believe that there is honesty and truth to be found. One of themselves a poet of their own, has said with no less justice than beauty Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell; And though foul things put on the brows of grace, Yet grace muss still look so.

But, above all, we have the authority of the Word of God, declaring that such backslidings are the very tests of the true church: "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you" (1 Corinthians 11:19). It is not meant, however, that any who had really believed went back to perdition. On the contrary, it is the creed of every sound evangelical church, that those who do go back to perdition were persons who never really believed in Jesus. Their eyes may have been opened to see the dread realities of sin and of the wrath to come; but if they did not see righteousness for their guilty souls in the Savior, there is nothing in all Scripture to make us expect that they will continue awake. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and Christ will give thee light, " is the call-inviting sinners to a point far beyond mere conviction. One who, for a whole year, went back to folly, said: "Your sermon on the corruption of the heart made me despair, and so I gave myself up to my old ways-attending dances, learning songs, etc." A knowledge of our guilt, and a sense of danger, will not of themselves keep us from falling; nay, these, if alone, may (as in the above case) thrust us down the slippery places. We are truly secure only when our eye is on Jesus, and our hand locked in His hand. So that the history of backslidings, instead of leading us to doubt the reality of grace in believers, will only be found to teach us two great lessons, viz. the vast importance of pressing immediate salvation on awakened souls, and the reasonableness of standing in doubt of all, however deep their convictions, who have not truly fled to the hope set before them.

There was another ground of prejudice against the whole work, arising from the circumstance that the Lord had employed in it young men not long engaged in the work of the ministry, rather than the fathers in Israel. But it was in this that sovereign grace shone forth more conspicuously. Do such objectors suppose that God ever intends the honor of man in a work of revival? Is it not the honor of His own name that He seeks? Had it been His wish to give the glory to man at all, then indeed it might have been asked, "Why does He pass by the older pastors, and call for the inexperienced youth?" But when sovereign grace was coming to bless a region in the way that would redound most to the glory of the Lord, can we conceive a wiser plan than to use the sling of David in bringing down the Philistine? If, however, there are some whose prejudice is from the root of envy, let such hear the remonstrance of Richard Baxter to the jealous ministers of his day. "What! malign Christ in gifts for which He should have the glory, and all because they seem to hinder our glory! Does not every man owe thanks to God for his brethren’s gifts, not only as having himself part in them, as the foot has the benefit of the guidance of the eye, but also because his own ends may be attained by his brethren’s gifts as well as by his own? ... A fearful thing that any man, that hath the least of the fear of God, should so envy at God’s gifts, that he would rather his carnal hearers were unconverted, and the drowsy not awakened, than that it should be done by another who may be preferred before them. " The work of the Spirit went on, the stream flowing gently; for the heavy showers had fallen, and the overflowing of the waters had passed by. Mr. McCheyne became more than ever vigilant and discriminating in dealing with souls. Observing, also, that some were influenced more by feelings of strong attachment to their pastor personally, than by the power of the truths he preached, he became more reserved in his dealings with them, so that some thought there was a little coldness or repulsiveness in his manner. If there did appear anything of this nature to some, certainly it was no indication of diminished compassion; but, on the contrary, proceeded from a scrupulous anxiety to guard others against the deceitful feelings of their own souls. A few notes of his work occur at this period.

"Nov. 27, 1839-A pleasant meeting in the Cross Church on Wednesday last, for the seamen. All that spoke seemed to honor the Saviour. I had to move thanksgiving to God for his mercies. This has been a real blessing to Dundee. It should not be forgotten in our prayers and thanksgivings. "

"Nov. 28, Thursday evening-Much comfort in speaking. There was often an awful stillness. Spoke on Jeremiah 6:14: 'They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly.' "

"Dec. 1-This evening came a tender Christian, so far as I can see; an exposition of that text, 'I will go softly,' or of that other, 'Thou shalt not open thy mouth any more.' A child of shame made one of honor. Her sister was awakened under Mr. Baxter's words in St. Peter's, of whom he asked, 'Would you like to be holy?' She replied, 'Indeed, I often wish I were dead that I might sin no more.' "

"Dec. 3-Preached six times within these two days."

"Dec. 8-Saw J. T. in fever. She seems really in Christ now; tells me how deeply my words sank into her soul when I was away. A. M. stayed to tell me her joy. J. B. walked home with me, telling me what God had done for his soul, when one day I had stopped at the quarry on account of a shower of rain, and took shelter with my pony in the engine-house." He had simply pointed to the fire of the furnace, and said, "What does that remind you of?" and the words had remained deep in the man's soul.

"Dec. 11-A woman awakened that night I preached in J. D.'s green, about two years ago, on Ezekiel 20:43. For twenty years she had been out of church privileges, and now, for the first time, came trembling to ask restoration. Surely Immanuel is in this place, and even old sinners are flocking to Him. I have got an account of about twenty prayer meetings connected with my flock. Many open ones; many fellowship meetings; only one or two have anything like exhortation super-added to the word. These, I think, it must be our care to change, if possible, lest error and pride creep in. The only other difficulty is this. In two of the female meetings, originally fellowship meetings, anxious female inquirers have been admitted. They do not pray, but only hear. In one, M. and J. had felt the rising of pride to a great degree; in the other, M. could not be persuaded that there was any danger of pride. This case will require prayerful deliberation. My mind at present is, that there is great danger from it, the praying members feeling themselves on a different level from the others, and anything like female teaching, as a public teacher, seems clearly condemned in the Word of God."

"Dec. 12-Felt very feeble all day, and as if I could not do any more work in the vineyard. Evening-Felt more of the reality of Immanuel's intercession. The people also were evidently subdued by more than a human testimony. One soul waited, sobbing most piteously. She could give no more account of herself than that she was a sinner, and did not believe that God would be merciful to her. When I showed how I found mercy, her only answer was, 'But you were not sic a sinner as me.'"

"Dec. 18-Went to Glasgow along with A. B. Preached in St. George's to a full audience, in the cause of the Jews. Felt real help in time of need." This was one of his many journeys from place to place in behalf of Israel, relating the things seen and heard among the Jews of Palestine and other lands.

"Dec. 22-Preached in Anderston Church, with a good deal of inward peace and comfort."

"Dec. 23-Interesting meeting with the Jewish Committee. In the evening met a number of God's people. The horror of some good people in Glasgow at the millenarian views is very great, while at the same time their objections appear very weak. "

"Dec. 31-Young communicants. Two have made application to be admitted under eleven years of age; four that are only fourteen; three who are fifteen or sixteen."

"Jan. 1, 1840-Awoke early by the kind providence of God, and had uncommon freedom and fervency in keeping the concert for prayer this morning before light. Very touching interview with M. P, who still refuses to be comforted. Was enabled to cry after a glorious Immanuel along with her. How I wish I had her bitter convictions of sin! Another called this evening, who says she was awakened and brought to Christ during the sermon on the morning of December 1st, on the 'Covenant with death.' Gave clear answers, but seems too unmoved for one really changed."

"Jan. 2-Visited six families. Was refreshed and solemnized at each of them. Spoke of the Word made flesh, and of all the paths of the Lord being mercy and truth. Visited in the evening by some interesting souls: one a believing little boy; another complaining she cannot come to Christ for the hardness of her heart; another once awakened under my ministry, again thoroughly awakened and brought to Christ under Horace Bonar's sermon at the Communion. She is the only saved one in her family-awfully persecuted by father and mother. Lord, stand up for Thine own! Make known, by their constancy under suffering, the power and beauty of Thy grace! Evening-Mr. Miller preached delightfully on 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' His account of the Protestants of France was very interesting: the work of God at Nismes, where it is said they are no more fishing with line, but dragging with the nets. Read a letter from Mr. Cumming, describing the work at Perth, and entreating the prayers of God's children." This last reference is to the awakening that took place in St. Leonard's Church, Perth, on the last night of the year, when Mr. Burns, along with their pastor, Mr. Milne, was preaching. Mr. B. had intended to return to Dundee for the Sabbath, but was detained by the plain indications of the Lord's' presence. At one meeting the work was so glorious, that one night about 150 persons at one time seemed bowed down under a sense of their guilt, and above 200 came next day to the church in the forenoon to converse about their souls. This awakening was the commencement of a solid work of grace, both in that town and its neighborhood, much fruit of which is to be found there at this day in souls that are walking in the fear of the Lord, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost. And it was in the spring of this same year that in Collace, at our weekly prayer meeting, when two brethren were ministering, we received a blessed shower from the Lord. His Journal proceeds:

"Jan. 3-An inquirer came, awakened under my ministry two years and a half ago. "

"Jan. 5-Two came; M. B. sorely wounded with the forenoon's discourse."

"Jan. 12-Intimated a concert for prayer, that unworthy communicants might be kept back, the Lord's children prepared for the feast, and ministers furnished from on high."

"Jan. 13-Kept concert of prayer this morning with my dear people. Did not find the same enlargement as usual."

"March 5, Thursday evening-Preached on Zech. (3.) Joshua. Was led to speak searchingly about making Christ the minister of sin. One young woman cried aloud very bitterly. M. B. came to tell me that poor M. is like to have her life taken away by her parents. A young woman also, who is still concerned and persecuted by her father. A young man came to tell me that he had found Christ. Roll on, thou river of life! visit every dwelling! save a multitude of souls. Come, Holy Spirit! come quickly!"

"March 25-Last night at Forfar speaking for Israel to a small band of friends of the Jews. Fearfully wicked place; the cry of it ascends up before God like that of Sodom."

"March 31-Met with young communicants on Wednesday and Friday. On the latter night especially, very deep feeling, manifested in sobbings. Visits of several. One dear child nine years old. Sick-bed."

"April 1-Presbytery day. Passed the constitution of two new churches-blessed be God! may He raise up faithful pastors for them both Dudhope and Wallace-Feus. Proposal also for the Mariner's Church. A fast day fixed for the present state of the church."

"April 5, Sabbath evening-Spoke to twenty-four young persons, one by one; almost all affected about their souls."

"April 6-Lovely ride and meditation in a retired grove."

"April 7-Impressed tonight with the complete necessity of preaching to my people in their own lanes and closes; in no other way will God's Word ever reach them. Tonight spoke in St. Andrew's Church to a very crowded assembly in behalf of Israel. Was helped to speak plainly to their own consciences. Lord, bless it! Shake this town.!"

"April 13-Spoke in private to nearly thirty young communicants, all in one room, going round each, and advising for the benefit of all."

"April 22-Rode to Colossi (Fife) and Kirkcaldy. Sweet time alone in Colossi woods."

"July 30-One lad came to me in great distress, wishing to know if he should confess his little dishonesties to his master." About this time, he has noted down, "I was visiting the other day, and came to a locked door. What did this mean? 'Torment me not, torment me not!' Ah, Satan is mighty still!"referring to Mark 5:7. A few of his Communion seasons are recorded. We could have desired a record of them all. The first of which he has detailed any particulars, is the one he enjoyed soon after returning home.

"Jan. 19, 1840-Stormy morning, with gushing torrents of rain, but cleared up in answer to prayer. Sweet union in prayer with Mr. Cumming, and afterwards with A. Bonar. Found God in secret. Asked especially that the very sight of the broken bread and poured-out wine might be blessed to some souls, then pride will be hidden from man. Church well filled-many standing. Preached the action sermon on John 17:24, 'Father, I will,' etc. Had considerable nearness to God in prayer-more than usual-and also freedom in preaching, although I was ashamed of such poor views of Christ's glory. The people were in a very desirable frame of attention-hanging on the Word. Felt great help in fencing the tables from Acts 5:3, 'Lying to the Holy Ghost.' Came down and served the first table with much more calmness and collectedness than ever I remember to

have enjoyed. Enjoyed a sweet season while A. B. served the next table. He dwelt chiefly on believing the words of Christ about His fulness, and the promise of the Father. There were six tables altogether. The people more and more moved to the end. At the last table, every head seemed bent like a bulrush while A. B. spoke of the ascension of Christ. Helped a little in the address, 'Now to Him who is able to keep you,' etc., and in the concluding prayer. (3) One little boy, in retiring, said. 'This has been another bonnie day.' Many of the little ones seemed deeply attentive. Mr. Cumming and Mr. Burns preached in the school the most of the day. In the evening Mr. C. preached on the Pillar Cloud on every dwelling, Isaiah 4:5, some very sweet powerful words. Mr. Burns preached in the schoolroom. When the church emptied, a congregation formed in the lower school, and began to sing. Sang several psalms with them, and spoke on 'Behold I stand at the door.' Going home, A. L. said, 'Pray for me; I am quite happy, and so is H.' Altogether a day of the revelation of Christ-a sweet day to myself, and, I am persuaded, to many souls. Lord, make us meet for the table above."

Another of these Communion seasons recorded, is April 1840. "Sabbath 19-Sweet and precious day. Preached action sermon on Zechariah 12:10, Zechariah 13:1. A good deal assisted. Also in fencing the tables, on Psalms 139:1-24, 'Search me, 0 God.' Less at serving the tables, on 'I will betroth thee,' and 'To him that overcometh;' though the thanksgiving was sweet. Communicated with calm joy. Old Mr. Burns served two tables; H. Bonar five. There was a very melting frame visible among the people. Helped a good deal in the address on 'My sheep hear my voice.' After seven before all was over. Met before eight. Old Mr. Burns preached on 'A word in season.' Gave three parting texts, and so concluded this blessed day. Many were filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

"Monday, 20-Mr. Grierson preached on 'Ye are come to Mount Zion'-an instructive word. Pleasant walk with H. B. Evening sermon from him to the little children on the 'new heart'-truly delightful. Prayer meeting after. I began; then old Mr. Burns, then Horace, in a very lively manner, on the `woman of Samurai.' The people were brought into a very tender frame. After the blessing, a multitude remained. One (A. N.) was like a person struck through with a dart, she could neither stand nor go. Many were looking on her with faces of horror. Others were comforting her in a very kind manner, bidding her look to Jesus. Mr. Burns went to the desk, and told them of Kilsyth. Still they would not go away. Spoke a few words more to those around me, telling them of the loveliness of Christ, and the hardness of their hearts, that they could be so unmoved when one was so deeply wounded. The sobbing soon spread, till many heads were bent down, and the church was filled with sobbing. Many whom I did not know were now affected. After prayer, we dismissed, near midnight. Many followed us. One, in great agony, prayed that she might find Christ that very night. So ends this blessed season." The prayer meeting on the Monday evening following the Communion was generally enjoyed by all the Lord's people, and by the ministers who assisted, in an unusual manner. Often all felt the last day of the feast to be the great day. Souls that had been enjoying the feast were then, at its conclusion, taking hold on the arm of the Beloved in the prospect of going up through the wilderness. The only notice of his last Communion, January 1, 1943, is the following: "Sabbath-A happy communion season. Mr. W. Burns preached on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings-the first and last very solemn. Mr. Baxter (of Hilltown Church) on the Friday. A. Bonar on Saturday, on Romans 8:1-39 :-The spirit of adoption. I fainted on the Sabbath morning, but revived, and got grace and strength to

preach on 1 Timothy 1:16 -Paul's conversion a pattern. There were five tables. Many godly strangers, and a very desirable frame observable in the people. 'While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth out the smell thereof.' Much sin was covered. He restoreth my soul. Monday, 2.- Mr. Milne (of Perth) preached on 'Hold fast that thou hast;' and in the evening, to the children, on Joshua 24:1-33.-'Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.' Andrew and I concluded with Revelation 5:1-14-Thou hast redeemed us,' etc., and 1 Corinthians 15:1-58.-`Be steadfast,' etc."

He dispensed the Lord's Supper to his flock every quarter; and though on this account his calls upon his brethren for help were frequent, yet never did a brother consider it anything else than a blessed privilege to be with him. His first invitation to his friend Mr. Hamilton (then at Abernyte) will show the nature of the intercourse that existed between him and his brethren who gave their services on these occasions:-"My dear Friend-Will you excuse lack of ceremony, and come down tomorrow and preach to us the unsearchable riches of Christ? We have the communion on Sabbath. We have no fast-day, but only a meeting in the evening at a quarter past seven. Come, my dear sir, if you can, and refresh us with your company. Bring the fragrance of `the bundle of myrrh' along with you, and may grace be poured into your lips. Yours ever." (Jan. 15, 1840.)

Soon after his return from his mission to the Jews, a ministerial prayer meeting was formed among some of the brethren in Dundee. Mr. McCheyne took part in it, along with Mr. Lewis of St. David's, Mr. Baxter of Hilltown, Mr. P. L. Miller, afterwards of Wallacetown, and others. Feeling deep concern for the salvation of the souls under their care, they met every Monday forenoon, to pray together for their flocks and their own souls. The time of the meeting was limited to an hour and a half, so that all who attended might take care of their pastoral arrangements for the day, without fear of being hindered; and, in addition to prayer, those present conversed on some selected topic vitally connected with their duties as ministers of Christ. Mr. McCheyne was never absent from this prayer meeting unless through absolute necessity, and the brethren scarcely remember any occasion on which some important remark did not drop from his lips. He himself reaped great profit from it. He notes, Dec. 8; "This has been a deeply interesting week. On Monday our ministerial prayer meeting was set agoing in St. David's vestry. The hearts of all seem really in earnest in it. The Lord answers prayer; may it be a great blessing to our souls and to our flocks." Another time: "Meeting in St. David's vestry. The subject of fasting was spoken upon. Felt exceedingly in my own spirit how little we feel real grief on account of sin before God, or we would often lose our appetite for food. When parents lose a child, they often do not taste a bit from morning to night, out of pure grief. Should we not mourn as for an only child? How little of the spirit of grace and supplication we have then!" On Dec. 30: "Pleasant meeting of ministers. Many delightful texts on 'Arguments to be used with God in prayer.' How little I have used these! Should we not study prayer more?"

Full as he was of affection and Christian kindness to all believers, he was especially so to the faithful brethren in the gospel of Christ. Perhaps there never was one who more carefully watched against the danger of undervaluing precious men, and detracting from a brother's character. Although naturally ambitious, grace so wrought en hem that he never sought to bring himself into view; and most cheerfully would he observe and take notice of the graces and gifts of others. Who is there of us that should ever feel otherwise? "For the body is not one member, but many." And "the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor, again, the head to the feet, I have

no need of you."

All with whom he was intimate still remember with gratitude how faithfully and anxiously he used to warn his friends of whatever he apprehended they were en danger from. To Mr. W C. Burns he wrote, Dec. 31, 1839: "Now, the Lord be your strength, teacher, and guide. I charge you, be clothed with humility, or you well yet be a wandering star, for which is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. Let Christ encrease; let man decrease. This is my constant prayer for myself and you. If you lead sinners to yourself and not to Christ, Immanuel well cast the star out of His right hand into utter darkness. Remember what I said of preaching out of the Scriptures: honor the Word both en the matter and manner. Do not cease to pray for me." At another time (November 3, 1841), he thus wrote to the same friend: "Now remember Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone. Looking at our own shining face is the bane of the spiritual life and of the ministry. Oh for closest communion with God, tell soul and body-head, face, and heart-shine with divine brilliancy! but oh for a holy ignorance of our shining! Pray for this; for you need et as well as I." To another friend en the ministry who had written to hem despondingly about his people and the times, his reply was, "I am sure there never was a time when the Spirit of God was more present in Scotland, and et does not become you to murmur en your tents, but rather to give thanks. Remember, we may grieve the Spirit as truly by not joyfully acknowledging His wonders as by not praying for Him. There is the clearest evidence that God is saving souls en Kilsyth, Dundee, Perth, Collace, Blairgowrie, Strathbogie, Ross-shire, Breadalbane, Kelso, Jedburgh, Ancrum; and surely et becomes us to say, 'I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.' Forgive my presumption; but I fear lest you hurt your own peace and usefulness en not praising God enough for the operation of his hands. " To another; "I have told you that you needed trial, and now et is come. May you be exercised thereby, and come to that happy 'afterwards' of which the apostle speaks." To the same again "Remember the necessity of your own soul, and do not grow slack or lean en feeding others. 'Mine own vineyard have I not kept.' Ah, take heed of that!" And en a similar tone of faithfulness en a later period: "Remember the case of your own soul. 'What well et profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' Remember how often Paul appeals to his holy, just, unblameable life. Oh that we may be able always to do the same!" "Remember the pruning-knife," he says to another, "and do not let your vine run to wood." And after a visit to Mr. Thornton of Milnathort, en whose parish there had been an awakening, he asks a brother, "Mr. Thornton is willing that others be blessed more than himself; do you think that you have that grace? I fend that I am never so successful as when I can lee at Christ's feet, willing to be used or not as seemeth good en His sight. Do you remember David? 'If the Lord say, I have no delight en thee; behold, here am I; let Hem do to me as seemeth good unto Hem. " In his familiar letters, as en his life, there was the manifestation of a bright, cheerful soul, without the least tendency to levity. When his medical attendant had, on one occasion, declined any remuneration, Mr. McCheyne peremptorily opposed his purpose; and to overcome his reluctance, returned the enclosure en a letter, en which he used his poetical gifts with most pleasant humor. To many it was a subject of wonder that he found time to write letters that always breathed the name of Jesus, amid his innumerable engagements. But the truth was, his letters cost him no expenditure of time; they were ever the fresh thoughts and feelings of his soul at the moment he took up the pen; his habitual frame of soul is what appears en them all; the calm, holy, tenderly affectionate style of his letters reminds us of Samuel Rutherford, whose works he delighted to read-excepting only that his joy never seems to have risen to ecstasies. The selection of his letters which I have

made for publication, may exhibit somewhat of his holy skill in dropping a word for his Master on all occasions. But what impressed many yet more, was his manner of introducing the truth, most naturally and strikingly, even in the shortest note he penned; and there was something so elegant, as well as solemn, in his few words at the close of some of his letters, that these remained deep in the receiver's heart. Writing to Mr. G. S., on July 28, 1841, he draws to a close: "Remember me to H. T. I pray he may be kept abiding in Christ. Kindest regards to his mother. Say to her from me, 'Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear, for as much as ye know ye were not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold' (1 Peter 1:17-18). Keep your own heart, dear brother, 'in the love of God' (Jude 1:21)-in His love to you, and that will draw your love to Him. Kindest remembrances to your brother. Say to him, 'Be sober and hope to the end' (1 Peter 1:13). To your own dear mother say, 'He doth not afflict willingly.' Write me soon. -Ever yours, till time shall be no more." In a note to the members of his own family: "The Tay is before me now like a resplendent mirror, glistening in the morning sun. May the same sun shine sweetly on you, and may He that makes it shine, shine into your hearts to give you the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.-In haste, your affectionate son and brother." There were often such last words as the following: "Oh for drops in the pastures of the wilderness! The smiles of Jesus be with you, and the breathings of the Holy Ghost. Ever Yours." (To Rev. J. Milne.) "May we have gales passing from Perth to this, and from here to you, and from heaven to both. Ever yours." (To the same.) "The time is short; eternity is near; yea, the coming of Christ the second time is at hand. Make sure of being one with the Lord Jesus, that you may be glad when you see Him. Commending you all to our Father in heaven." (To his own brother.) "I have a host of letters before me, and therefore can add no more. I give you a parting text, 'Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.' " Another: "Farewell! yours till the day dawn." To the Rev. Hor.Bonar he says, at the close of a letter about some ministerial arrangements: "I am humbled and cheered by what you say of good done in Kelso. "Roll on, roll on, river of God, that art full of water! A woman came to me, awakened under your sermon to the children in the Cross Church, very bitterly convinced of sin. Glory to the Divine Archer, who bringeth down the people!" He closes a letter to a student thus: "Grace be with you, and much of the knowledge of Jesus-much of His likeness. I thirst for the knowledge of the Word, but most of all of Jesus Himself, the true Word. May He abide in you, and you in Him! The Fear of Isaac watch over you." In concluding a letter to Mr. Bonar of Larbert, in February 1843, some weeks before his last illness, he writes: "My soul often goes out at the throne of grace in behalf of Larbert and Dunipace. May the disruption be more blessed to them than days of peace! How sweet to be in the ark when the deluge comes down! Ever yours in gospel bonds." The Jewish Mission continued near his heart, "the nearest," said he to Mw. Edwards, who is now at Jassy, "of all missionary enterprises. Were it not for my own unfitness, and also the success the Lord has given me where I am, I would joyfully devote myself to it." In connection with this cause, he was invited to visit Ireland, and be present at the meeting of the Synod of our Presbyterian brethren in the summer of 1840. When preparing to set out, he noticed the hand of his Master guiding him:-"July 2-Expected to have been in Ireland this day. Detained by not being able to get supply for Sabbath, in the good providence of God; for this evening there was a considerable awakening in the church while I was preaching upon Php 3:18, 'Enemies of the cross of Christ.' When that part was expounded, there was a loud and bitter weeping-probably thirty or forty seemed to share in it; the rest deeply impressed-many secretly praying." On the Sabbath following, one person was so overcome as to be carried out of the church.

He set out for Ireland on the 7th, and on the 10th witnessed at Belfast the union between the Synod of Ulster and the Secession. He speaks of it as a most solemn scene-500 ministers and elders present. During his stay there, he pleaded the cause of the Jews in Mr. Mormon's church, Mr. Wilson's, and some others; and also visited Mr. Kirkpatrick at Dublin. He preached the way of salvation to the Gentiles in all his pleadings for Israel. His visit was blessed to awaken a deep interest in the cause of the Jews, and his words sank into the conscience of some. His sermon on Ezekiel 34:16 was felt by some to be indescribably impressive; and when he preached on Romans 1:16-17, many ministers, as they came out, were heard saying, "How was it we never thought of the duty of remembering Israel before?" On another occasion, the people to whom he had preached entreated their minister to try and get him again, and if he could not preach to them, that at least he should pray once more with them.

He was not, however, long absent from home on this occasion. On the 25th I find him recording: "Reached home; entirely unprepared for the evening. Spoke on Psalms 51:12-13, 'Restore unto me the joy,' etc. There seemed much of the presence of God,-first one crying out in extreme agony, then another. Many were deeply melted, and all solemnized. Felt a good deal of freedom in speaking of the glory of Christ's salvation. Coming down, I spoke quietly to some whom I knew to be under deep concern. They were soon heard together weeping bitterly; many more joined them. Mr. Cumming spoke to them in a most touching strain, while I dealt privately with several in the vestry. Their cries were often very bitter and piercing, bitterest when the freeness of Christ was pressed upon them, and the lion's nearness. Several were offended; but I felt no hesitation as to our duty to declare the simple truth impressively, and leave God to work in their hearts in His own way. If He saves souls in a quiet way, I shall be happy; if in the midst of cries and tears, still I will bless His name. One painful thing has occurred: a man who pretends to be a missionary for Israel, and who brings forward the apocryphal book of Enoch, has been among my people in my absence, and many have been led after him. How humbling is this to them and to me! Lord, what is man! This may be blessed, 1st, to discover chaff which we thought to be wheat; 2nd, to lead some to greater distrust of themselves, when their eyes are opened; 3rd, to teach me the need of solidly instructing those who seem to have grace in their hearts. " The work of God went on, so much so at this time, that he gave it as his belief, in a letter to Mr. Purves of Jedburgh, that for some months about this period no minister of Christ had preached in a lively manner, without being blessed to some soul among his flock. In other places of Scotland also the Lord was then pouring out His Spirit. Perth has been already mentioned, and its vicinity. Throughout Ross-shire, whole congregations were frequently moved as one man, and the voice of the minister drowned in the cries of anxious souls. At Kelso, where Mr. Horace Bonar labored, and at Jedburgh, where Mr. Purves was pastor, a more silent but very solid work of conversion was advancing. At Ancrum (once the scene of John Livingston's labors), the whole parish, but especially the men of the place, were awakened to the most solemn concern. On Lochtayside, where Mr. Burns was for a season laboring, there were marks of the Spirit everywhere; and the people crossing the lake in hundreds, to listen to the words of life on the hillside, called to mind the people of Galilee in the days when the gospel began to be preached. At Lawers, Mr. Campbell, their pastor (who has now fallen asleep in Jesus), spoke of the awakening as "like a resurrection," so great and sudden was the change from deadness to intense concern. On several occasions, the Spirit seemed to sweep over the congregations like wind over the fields, which bends the heavy corn to the earth. It was evident to discerning minds that the Lord was preparing Scotland for some crisis not far distant.

Several districts of Strathbogie had shared to some extent in a similar blessing. Faithful ministers were now everywhere on the watch for the shower, and were greatly strengthened to go forward boldly in seeking to cleanse the sanctuary. It was their fond hope that the Established Church of Scotland would soon become an example and pattern to the nations of a pure church of Christ, acknowledged and upheld by the State without being trammelled in any degree, far less controlled by civil interference. But Satan was stirring up adversaries on every side. The Court of Session had adopted a line of procedure that was at once arbitrary and unconstitutional. And now that Court interdicted, under the penalty of fine or imprisonment, all the ministers of the Church of Scotland from administering ordinances or preaching the Word in any of the seven parishes of Strathbogie, whose former incumbents had been suspended from office by the General Assembly for ecclesiastical offenses. The church saw it to be her duty to refuse obedience to an interdict that hindered the preaching of Jesus, and attempted to crush her constitutional liberties. Accordingly, ministers were sent to these districts, fearless of the result; and under their preaching the gross darkness of the region began to give way to the light of truth. In the month of August, Mr. McCheyne was appointed, along with Mr. Cumming of Dumbarney, to visit Huntly, and dispense the Lord’s Supper there. As he set out, he expressed the hope that "the dews of the Spirit there might be turned into the pouring rain." His own visit was blessed to many. Mr. Cumming preached the action sermon in the open air at the Meadow Well; but the tables were served within the building where the congregation usually met. Mr. McCheyne preached in the evening to a vast multitude at the well; and about a hundred waited after sermon for prayer, many of them in deep anxiety.

He came to Edinburgh on the 11th, to attend the meeting of ministers and elders who had come together to sign the Solemn Engagement in defense of the liberties of Christ’s church. He did not hesitate to put his hand to the Engagement. He then returned to Dundee; and scarcely had he returned, when he was laid aside by one of those attacks of illness with which he was so often tried. In this case, however, it soon passed away. "My health," he remarked, "has taken a gracious turn, which should make me look up." But again, on September 6, an attack of fever laid him down for six days. On this occasion, just before the sickness came on, three persons had visited him, to tell him how they were brought to Christ under his ministry some years before. "Why," he noted in his journal, "Why has God brought these cases before me this week? Surely He is preparing me for some trial of faith." The result proved that his conjecture was correct. And while his Master prepared him beforehand for these trials, He had ends to accomplish in his servant by means of them. There were other trials, also, besides these, which were very heavy to him; but in all we could discern the Husbandman pruning the branch, that it might bear more fruit. As he himself said one day in the church of Abernyte, when he was assisting Mr. Manson, "If we only saw the whole, we should see that the Father is doing little else in the world but training his vines." His preaching became more and more to him a work of faith. Often I find him writing at the close or beginning of a sermon: "Master, help!" "Help, Lord, help!" "Send showers"; "Pardon, give the Spirit, and take the glory"; "May the opening of my lips be right things!" The piercing effects of the word preached on souls at this time may be judged by what one of the awakened, with whom he was conversing, said to him, "I think hell would be some relief from an angry God." His delight in preaching was very great. He himself used to say that he could scarcely resist an invitation to preach. And this did not arise from the natural excitement there is in commanding the attention of thousands; for he was equally ready to proclaim Christ to small country flocks. Nay, he was ready to travel far to visit

and comfort even one soul. There was an occasion this year on which he rode far to give a cup of cold water to a disciple, and his remark was, "I observe how often Jesus went a long way for one soul, as for example the maniac, and the woman of Canaan." In February 1841, he visited Kelso and Jedburgh at the Communion season; and gladly complied with an invitation to Ancrum also, that he might witness the hand of the Lord. "Sweet are the spots," he wrote, "where Immanuel has ever shown his glorious power in the conviction and conversion of sinners. The world loves to muse on the scenes where battles were fought and victories won. Should not we love the spots where our great Captain has won His amazing victories? Is not the conversion of a soul more worthy to be spoken of than the taking of Acre?" At Kelso, some will long remember his remarks in visiting a little girl, to whom he said, "Christ gives last knocks. When your heart becomes hard and careless, then fear lest Christ may have given a last knock." At Jedburgh, the impression left was chiefly that there had been among them a man of unique holiness. Some felt, not so much his words, as his presence and holy solemnity, as if one spoke to them who was standing in the presence of God; and to others his prayers appeared like the breathings of one already within the veil.

I find him proposing to a minister who was going up to the General Assembly that year, "that the Assembly should draw out a Confession of Sin for all its ministers." The state, also, of parishes under the direful influence of Moderatism, came deeply upon his spirit. In his diary he writes: "Have been laying much to hear the absolute necessity laid upon the church of sending the gospel to our dead parishes, during the life of the present incumbents. It is confessed that many of our ministers do not preach the gospel-alas! because they know it not. Yet they have complete control over their own pulpits, and may never suffer the truth to be heard there during their whole incumbency. And yet our church consigns these parishes to their tender mercies for perhaps fifty years, without a sigh! Should not certain men be ordained as evangelists, with full power to preach in every pulpit of their district-faithful, judicious, lively preachers, who may go from parish to parish, and thus carry life into many a dead corner?" This was a subject he often reverted to; and he eagerly held up the example of the Presbytery of Aberdeen, who made a proposal to this effect. From some of his later letters, it appears that he had sometimes seriously weighed the duty of giving up his fixed charge, if only the church would ordain him as an evangelist. So deep were his feelings on this matter, that a friend relates of him that, as they rode together through a parish where the pastor "clothed himself with the wool, but fed not the flock," he knit his brow and raised his hand with vehemence as he spoke of the people left to perish under such a minister.

He was invited to visit Ireland again this year, his former visit having been much valued by the Presbyterian brethren there. He did so in July. Many were greatly stirred by his preaching, and by his details of God’s work in Scotland. His sermon on Song of Solomon 8:5-6, is still spoken of by many. His prayerfulness and consistent holiness left enduring impressions on not a few; and it was during his visit that a memorial was presented to the Irish Assembly in behalf of a Jewish mission. His visit was in a great measure the means of setting that mission on its way.

Cordially entering into the proposal of a united effort for prayer, he took part, in September of this year, in the preliminary meetings in which Christians of all denominations joined. "How sweet are the smallest approximations to unity!" is his remark in his diary. Indeed, he so much longed for a scriptural unity, that some time later, when the General Assembly had repealed the statute of 1799, he embraced the opportunity of showing his sincere desire for unity, by inviting two

dissenting brethren to his pulpit, and then writing in defense of his conduct when attacked. In reference to this matter, he observed, in a note to a friend: "I have been much delighted with the 25th and 26th chapters of the Confession of Faith. Oh for the grace of the Westminster divines to be poured out upon this generation of lesser men!" As it was evident that his Master owned his labor abundantly, by giving him seals of his apostleship, attempts were made occasionally by zealous friends to induce him to move to other fields of service. In all these cases, he looked simply at the apparent indications of the Lord's will. Worldly interest seemed scarcely ever to cross his mind in regard to such a matter, for he truly lived a disinterested life. His views may be judged by one instance-a letter to Mr. Heriot of Ramornie, in reference to a charge that many were anxious to offer him:

"Dundee, Dec. 24, 1841

"DEAR SIR-I have received a letter from my friend Mr. M'Farlane of Collessie, asking what I would do if the people of Kettle were to write desiring me to be their minister. He also desires me to send an answer to you. I have been asked to leave this place again and again, but have never seen my way clear to do so. I feel quite at the disposal of my Divine Master. I gave myself away to Him when I began my ministry, and He has guided me as by the Pillar Cloud from the first day till now. I think I would leave this place tomorrow if He were to bid me; but as to seeking removal, I dare not and could not. If my ministry were unsuccessful-if God frowned upon the place and made my message void-then I would willingly go, for I would rather beg my bread than preach without success; but I have never wanted success. I do not think I can speak a month in this parish without winning some souls. This very week, I think, has been a fruitful one-more so than many for a long time, which perhaps was intended graciously to free me from all hesitation in declining your kind offer. I mention these things not, I trust, boastfully, but only to show you the ground upon which I feel it to be my duty not for a moment to entertain the proposal. I have 4000 souls here hanging on me. I have as much of this world's goods as I care for. I have full liberty to preach the gospel night and day; and the Spirit of God is often with us. What can I desire more? 'I dwell among mine own people.' Hundreds look to me as a father; and I fear I would be but a false shepherd if I were to leave them when the clouds of adversity are beginning to lower. I know the need of Kettle, and its importance; and also the dark prospect of your getting a godly minister. Still that is a future event in the hand of God. My duty is made plain and simple according to God's word.

"Praying that the Lord Jesus may send you a star from His own right hand, believe me to be...."

It was during this year that the Sabbath question began to interest him so much. His tract, I Love the Lord's Day, was published December 18; but he had already exerted himself much in this cause, as convener of the Committee of Presbytery on Sabbath Observance, and had written his well known letter to one of the chief defenders of the Sabbath desecration. He continued unceasingly to use every effort in this holy cause. And is it not worth the prayers and self denying efforts of every believing man? Is not that day set apart as a season wherein the Lord desires the refreshing rest of His own love to be offered to a fallen world? Is it not designed to be a day on which every other voice and sound is to be hushed, in order that the silver trumpets may proclaim atonement for sinners? Nay, it is understood to be a day wherein God Himself stands before the altar and pleads with sinners to accept the Lamb slain, from morning to evening. Who is there who does not see the deep design of Satan in seeking to effect an inroad on this most merciful

appointment of God our Savior?

Mr. McCheyne’s own conduct was in full accordance with his principles in regard to strict yet cheerful Sabbath observance. Considering it the summit of human privilege to be admitted to fellowship with God, his principle was, that the Lord’s Day was to be spent wholly in the enjoyment of that sweetest privilege. A letter, written at a later period, but bearing on this subject, will show how he felt this day to be better than a thousand. An individual, near Inverness, had consulted him on a point of sabbatical casuistry: the question was, Whether or not it was sinful to spend time in registering meteorological observations on the Sabbaths? His reply was the following, marked by a holy wisdom, and discovering the place that the Lord held in his inmost soul:

"Dec. 7, 1842

"DEAR FRIEND-You ask me a hard question. Had you asked me what I would do in the case, I could easily tell you. I love the Lord’s day too well to be marking down the height of the thermometer and barometer every hour. I have other work to do, higher and better, and more like that of angels above. The more entirely I can give my Sabbaths to God, and half forget that I am not before the throne of the Lamb, with my harp of gold, the happier am I, and I feel it my duty to be as happy as I can be, and as God intended me to be. The joy of the Lord is my strength. But whether another Christian can spend the Sabbath is His service, and mark down degrees of heat and atmospherical pressure, without letting down the warmth of his affections, or losing the atmosphere of heaven, I cannot tell. My conscience is not the rule of another man. One thing we may learn from these men of science, namely, to be as careful in marking the changes and progress of our own spirit, as they are in marking the changes of the weather. An hour should never pass without our looking up to God for forgiveness and peace. This is the noblest science, to know how to live in hourly communion with God in Christ. May you and I know more of this, and thank God that we are not among the wise and prudent from whom these things are hid!-The grace of the Lord of the Sabbath be with you."

Until this period, the Narrative of Our Mission to Israel had not been given to the public. Interruptions, arising from multiplicity of labors and constant calls of duty, had from time to time come in our way. Mr. McCheyne found it exceedingly difficult to spare a day or two at a time in order to take part. "I find it hard work to carry on the work of a diligent pastor and that of an author at the same time. How John Calvin would have smiled at my difficulties!" At length, however, in the month of March 1842, we resolved to gain time by exchanging each other’s pastoral duties for a month. Accordingly, during four or five weeks, he remained in Collace, my flock enjoying his Sabbath Day services and his occasional visits, while he was set free from what would have been the never-ceasing interruptions of his own town.

Many pleasant remembrances remain of these days, as sheet after sheet passed under the eyes of our mutual criticism. Though intent on accomplishing his work, he kept by his rule, "that he must first see the face of God before he could undertake any duty." Often he would wander in the mornings among the pleasant woods of Dennison, until he had drunk in refreshment to his soul by meditation on the Word of God; and then he took up the pen. And to a brother in the ministry, who had one day broken in on his private occupation, he afterward wrote: "You know you stole away my day; yet I trust all was not lost. I think I have had more grace ever since that prayer among the fir-trees. Oh to be like Jesus, and with Him to all eternity!" Occasionally, during the same period,

he wrote some pieces for the Christian’s Daily Companion. The Narrative was finished in May, and the Lord has made it acceptable to the brethren. When this work was finished, the Lord had other employment ready for him in his own parish. His diary had this entry: "May 22-I have seen some very evident awakenings of late. J. G. awakened partly through the word preached, and partly through the faithful warnings of her fellow-servant A. R., who has been for about a year in the deepest distress, seeking rest, but finding none. B. M. converted last winter at the Tuesday meeting in Annfield. She was brought very rapidly to peace with God, and to a calm, sedate, prayerful state of mind. I was surprised at the quickness of the work in this case, and pleased with the clear tokens of grace; and now I see God’s gracious end in it. She was to be admitted at last communion, but caught fever before the Sabbath. On Tuesday last, she died in great peace and joy. When she felt death coming on, she said, ’Oh death, death, come! let us sing!’ Many that knew her have been a good deal moved homeward by this solemn providence. This evening, I invited those to come who are leaving the parish at this term. About twenty came, to whom I gave tracts and words of warning. I feel persuaded that if I could follow the Lord more fully myself, my ministry would be used to make a deeper impression than it has yet done."

04.06. The Latter Days of HIs Ministry

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CHAPTER 6 In The Latter Days of f His Ministry My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish his work. John 4:34

During the summer of 1842, he was exposed to several attacks of illness, experienced some severe personal trials, and felt the assaults of sore temptation. His own words will best express his state: "July 17-I am myself much tempted, and have no hope, but as a worm on the arm of Jesus." "Aug. 4 Often, often, would I have been glad to depart, and be with Christ. I am now much better in body and mind, having a little of the presence of my beloved, whose absence is death to me." The same month: "I have been carried through deep waters, bodily and spiritual, since last we met." It was his own persuasion that few had more to struggle with in the inner man. Who can tell what wars go on within?

During this season of trial, he was invited to form one of a number of ministers from Scotland, who were to visit the north of England, with no other purpose than to preach the glad tidings. The scheme was planned by a Christian gentleman, who has done much for Christ in his generation. When the invitation reached him, he was in the heat of his furnace. He mentioned this to the brother who corresponded with him on the subject, Mr. Purves of Jedburgh, whose reply was balm to his spirit: "I have a fellow-feeling with you in your present infirmity, and you know for your consolation that another has, who is a brother indeed. In all our afflictions, He is afflicted. He is, we may say, the common heart of His people, for they are one body; and an infirmity in the very remotest and meanest member is felt there and borne there. Let us console, solace, yea, satiate ourselves in Him, as, amid afflictions especially, brother does in brother. It is blessed to be like Him in everything, even in suffering. There is a great want about all Christians who have not suffered. Some flowers must be broken or bruised before they emit any fragrance. All the wounds of Christ send out sweetness; all the sorrows of Christians do the same. Commend me to a bruised brother-a broken reed-one like the Son of man. The Man of Sorrows is never far from him. To me there is something sacred and sweet in all suffering; it is so much akin to the Man of Sorrows." It was thus he suffered, and thus that he was comforted. He wrote back, agreeing to go, and added. "Remember me especially, who am heavy laden oftentimes. My heart is all of sin; but Jesus lives."

They set out for England. Mr. Purves, Mr. Somerville of Anderston, Mr. Cumming of Dumbarney, and Mr. Bonar of Kelso, formed the company. Their chief station was Newcastle, where Mr. Burns had recently been laboring with some success, and where he had seen "a town giving itself up to utter ungodli-ness a town where Satan's trenches were deep and wide, his wall strong and high, his garrison great and fearless, and where all that man could do seemed but as arrows shot against a tower of brass." But those who went knew that the Spirit of God was omnipotent, and that He could take the prey from the mighty.

They preached both in the open air, and in the places of worship belonging to the Presbyterians and to the Wesleyan Methodists. The defenders of the Sabbath cause were especially prepared to welcome Mr. McCheyne, whose tract on the Lord's Day has been widely circulated and blessed. Many were attracted to hear; interesting congregations assembled in the marketplace, and there is reason to believe many were impressed. A person in the town describes Mr. McCheyne's last address as being peculiarly awakening. He preached in the open air, in a space of ground between the Cloth Market and St. Nicholas' Church. Above a thousand souls were present, and the service continued until ten, without one person moving from the ground. The moon shone brightly, and the sky was spangled with stars. His subject was, "The Great White Throne" (Revelation 20:11). In concluding his address, he told them "that they would never meet again till they all met at the judgment seat of Christ; but the glorious heavens over their heads, and the bright moon that shone upon them, and the old venerable church behind them, were his witnesses that he had set before them life and death." Some will have cause to remember that night through eternity. (He later preached the same subject with equal impressiveness in the Meadows at Dundee. It was in the open air and the rain fell heavy, yet the dense crowd stood still to the end.) His preaching at Gilsland also was not without effect; and he had good cause to bless the Lord for bringing him through Dumfriesshire on his way homeward. He returned to his people in the beginning of September, full of peace and joy. "I have returned much stronger, indeed quite well. I think I have got some precious souls for my hire on my way home. I earnestly long for more grace and personal holiness, and more usefulness." The sunsets during that autumn were peculiarly beautiful. Scarcely a day passed but he gazed on the glowing west after dinner; and as he gazed he would speak of the Sun of Righteousness, or the joy of angels in His presence, or the blessedness of those whose sun can go no more down, until his face shone with gladness as he spoke. And during the winter he was observed to be particularly joyful, being strong in body, and feeling the near presence of Jesus in his soul. He lived in the blessed consciousness that he was a child of God, humble and meek, just because he was fully assured that Jehovah was his God and Father. Many often felt that in prayer the name "Holy Father" was breathed with special tenderness and solemnity from his lips. His flock in St. Peter's began to murmur at his absence, when again he left them for ten days in November, to assist Mr. Hamilton of Regent Square, London, at his communion. But it was his desire for souls that thus led him from place to place, combined with a growing feeling that the Lord was calling him to evangelistic more than to pastoral labors. This visit was a blessed one; and the growth of his soul in holiness was visible to many. During the days of his visit to Mr. Hamilton, he read through the Song of Solomon at the time of family worship, commenting briefly on it with rare gracefulness and poetic taste, and yet rarer manifestation of soul-filling love to the Savior's person. The sanctified affections of his soul, and his insight into the mind of Jesus, seemed to have deeply affected his friends on these occasions.

Receiving, while here, an invitation to return by the way of Kelso, he replied:

"London, Nov. 5, 1842

"MY DEAR HORATIUS Our friends here will not let me away till the Friday morning, so that it will require all my diligence to reach Dundee before the Sabbath. I will thus be disappointed of the joy of seeing you, and ministering a word to your dear flock. Oh that my soul were new moulded, and I were effectually called a second time, and made a vessel full of the Spirit, to tell only of Jesus and his love! I fear I shall never be in this world what I desire. I have preached three times here; a few

tears also have been shed. Oh for Whitfield’s week in London, when a thousand letters came! The same Jesus reigns; the same Spirit is able. Why is He restrained? Is the sin ours? Are we the bottle-stoppers of these heavenly dews? Ever yours till glory.

"PS.-We shall meet, God willing, at the Convocation." The memorable Convocation met at Edinburgh on November 17. There were five hundred ministers present from all parts of Scotland. The encroachment of the civil courts upon the prerogatives of Christ, the only Head acknowledged by our church, and the negligent treatment hereto given by the legislature of the country to every remonstrance on the part of the church, had brought on a crisis. The Church of Scotland had maintained, from the days of the Reformation, that her connection with the State was understood to imply no surrender whatsoever of complete independence in regulating all spiritual matters; and to have allowed any civil authority to control her in doctrine, discipline, or any spiritual act, would have been a daring and flagrant act of treachery to her Lord and King. The deliberations of the Convocation continued during eight days, and the momentous results are well known in this land.

Mr. McCheyne was never absent from any of the diets of this solemn assembly. He felt the deepest interest in every matter that came before them, got much light as to the path of duty in the course of the consultations, and put his name to all the resolutions, heartily sympathizing in the decided determination that, as a church of Christ, we must abandon our connection with the State, if our "Claim of Rights" were rejected. These eight days were times of remarkable union and prayerfulness. The proceedings, from time to time, were suspended until the brethren again asked counsel of the Lord by prayer; and none present will forget the affecting solemnity with which, on one occasion, Mr. McCheyne poured out our wants before the Lord.

He had a decided abhorrence of Erastianism. When the question was put to him, "Is it our duty to refuse ordination to any one who holds the views of Erastianism?" he replied: "Certainly, whatever be his other qualifications." He was ever a thorough Presbyterian, and used to maintain the necessity of abolishing lay patronage, because first, it was not to be found in the word of God; second, it destroyed the duty of "trying the spirits"; third, it meddled with the headship of Christ, coming in between Him and his people, saying, "I will place the stars." But still more decided was he in regard to the spiritual independence of the church. This he considered a vital question; and in prospect of the disruption of the Church of Scotland, If it were denied, he stated at a public meeting, first, that it was to be deplored in some respects, viz., because of the sufferings of God’s faithful servants, the degradation of those who remained behind, the alienation of the aristocracy, the perdition of the ungodly, and the sin of the nation. But, second, it was to be hailed for other reasons, viz., Christ’s kingly offices would be better known, the truth would be spread into desolate parishes, and faithful ministers would be refined. And when, on March 7th of the following year, the cause of the church was finally to be pleaded at the bar of the House of Commons, I find him writing: "Eventful night this in the British Parliament! Once more King Jesus stands at an earthly tribunal, and they know Him not!" An interesting anecdote is related of him by a co-presbyter, who returned with him to Dundee after the Convocation. This co-presbyter, Mr. Stewart, was conversing with him as to what it might be their duty to do in the event of the disruption, and where they might be scattered. Mr. Stewart said he could preach Gaelic, and might go to the Highlanders in Canada, if it were needful. Mr. McCheyne said, "I think of going to the many thousand convicts that are transported beyond seas, for no man careth for their souls."

We do not have many records of his public work after this date. Almost the last note in his diary is dated December 25: "This day ordained four elders, and admitted a fifth, who will all, I trust, be a blessing in this place when I am gone. Was graciously awakened a great while before day, and had two hours alone with God. Preached with much comfort on 1 Timothy 5:17, 'Let the elders that rule well,' etc. At the end of the sermon and prayer, proposed the regular questions; then made the congregation sing standing; during which time I came down from the pulpit and stood over the four men, then prayed, and all the elders gave the right hand of fellowship, during which I returned to the pulpit, and addressed them and the congregation on their relative duties. Altogether a solemn scene." The last recorded cases of awakening, and the last entry in his diary, is dated January 6, 1843: "Heard of an awakened soul finding rest-true rest, I trust. Two new cases of awakening; both very deep and touching. At the very time when I was beginning to give up in despair, God gives me tokens of His presence returning."

He here speaks of discouragement, when God for a few months or weeks seemed to be withholding His hand from saving souls. If he was not right in thus hastily forgetting the past for a little, still this feature of his ministry is to be well considered. He entertained so full a persuasion that a faithful minister has every reason to expect to see souls converted under him, that when this was withheld, he began to fear that some hidden evil was provoking the Lord and grieving the Spirit. And ought it not to be so with all of us? Ought we not to suspect, either that we are not living near to God, or that our message is not a true transcript of the glad tidings, in both matter and manner, when we see no souls brought to Jesus? God may certainly hide from our knowledge much of what He accomplishes by our means, but as certainly will He bring to our view some seals of our ministry, in order that our persuasion of being thus sent by Him may solemnize and overawe us, as well as lead us on to unwearied labor. Ought it not be the inscription over the doors of our Assembly and College halls: "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His Knowledge by us in every place" (2 Corinthians 2:14)?

About this time, in one of his manuscripts, there occurs this sentence: "As I was walking in the fields, the thought came over me with almost overwhelming power, that every one of my flock must soon be in heaven or hell. Oh, how I wished that I had a tongue like thunder, that I might make all hear; or that I had a frame like iron, that I might visit every one, and say, 'Escape for thy life!' Ah, sinners! you little know how I fear that you will lay the blame of your damnation at my door."

He was never satisfied with his own attainments in holiness; he was always ready to learn, and quick to apply, any suggestion that might tend to his greater usefulness. About this time he used to sing a psalm or hymn every day after dinner. It was often, "The Lord's My Shepherd," etc.; or, "Oh May We Stand Before the Lamb!" etc. Sometimes it was that hymn, "Oh for a Closer Walk With God!" and sometimes the psalm, "Oh That I Like a Dove Had Wings!" A friend said of him. "I have sometimes compared him to the silver and graceful ash, with its pensile branches, and leaves of gentle green, reflecting gleams of happy sunshine. The fall of its leaf, too, is like the fall of his-it is green tonight and gone tomorrow, it does not sere nor wither." An experienced servant of God has said, that, while popularity is a snare that few are not caught by, a more subtle and dangerous snare is to be famed for holiness. The fame of being a godly man is as great a snare as the fame of being learned or eloquent. It is possible to attend with scrupulous anxiety even to secret habits of devotion, in order to get a name for holiness .2 If any were exposed to this snare in his day, Mr. McCheyne was the person. Yet nothing is more certain than that, to the very last, he was ever

discovering, and successfully resisting, the deceitful tendencies of his own heart and a tempting devil. Two things he seems never to have ceased from-the cultivation of personal holiness, and the most anxious efforts to save souls.

About this time he wrote down, for his own use, an examination into things that ought to be amended and changed. I subjoin it entirely. How singularly close and impartial are these researches into his soul! How acute is he in discovering his variations from the holy law of God! Oh that we all were taught by the same spirit thus to try our reins! It is only when we are thus thoroughly experiencing our helplessness, and discovering the thousand forms of indwelling sin, that we really sit as disciples at Christ's feet, and gladly receive Him as all in all! And at each such moment we feel in the spirit of Ignatius, "It is only now that I begin to be a disciple."

Mr. McCheyne entitles the examination of his heart and life "Reformation," and it begins with:

"It is the duty of ministers in this day to begin the reformation of religion and manners with themselves, families, etc., with confession of past sin, earnest prayer for direction, grace, and full purpose of heart. Malachi 3:3= He shall purify the sons of Levi.' Ministers are probably laid aside for a time for this very purpose.

"1. Personal Reformation.

"I am persuaded that I shall obtain the highest amount of present happiness, I shall do most for God's glory and the good of man, and I shall have the fullest reward in eternity, by maintaining a conscience always washed in Christ's blood, by being filled with the Holy Spirit at all times, and by attaining the most entire likeness to Christ in mind, will, and heart, that is possible for a redeemed sinner to attain to in this world.

"I am persuaded that whenever any one from without, or my own heart from within, at any moment, or in any circumstances, contradicts this-if any one shall insinuate that it is not for my present and eternal happiness, and for God's glory and my usefulness, to maintain a blood-washed conscience, to be entirely filled with the Spirit, and to be fully conformed to the image of Christ in all things-that is the voice of the devil, God's enemy, the enemy of my soul and of all good-the most foolish, wicked, and miserable of all the creatures. See Proverbs 9:17 'Stolen waters are sweet.'

"1. To maintain a conscience void of offence, I am persuaded that I ought to confess my sins more. I think I ought to confess sin the moment I see it to be sin; whether I am in company, or in study, or even preaching, the soul ought to cast a glance of abhorrence at the sin. If I go on with the duty, leaving the sin unconfessed, I go on with a burdened conscience, and add sin to sin. I think I ought at certain times of the day-my best timessay, after breakfast and after tea-to confess solemnly the sins of the previous hours, and to seek their complete remission.

"I find that the devil often makes use of the confession of sin to stir up again the very sin confessed into new exercise, so that I am afraid to dwell upon the confession. I must ask experienced Christians about this. For the present, I think I should strive against this awful abuse of confession, whereby the devil seeks to frighten me away from confessing. I ought to take all methods for seeing the vileness of my sins. I ought to regard myself as a condemned branch of Adam-as partaker of a nature opposite to God from the womb (Psalms 51:1-19.)-as hawing a heart full of all

wickedness, which pollutes every thought, word, and action, during my whole life, from birth to death. I ought to confess often the sins of my youth, like David and Paul-my sins before conversion, my sins since conversion-sins against light and knowledge, against love and grace, against each person of the Godhead. I ought to look at my sins in the light of the holy law, in the light of God's countenance, in the light of the cross, in the light of the judgment-seat, in the light of hell, in the light of eternity. I ought to examine my dreams-my floating thoughts-my predilections-my often recurring actions-my habits of thought, feeling, speech, and action-the slanders of my enemies and the reproofs, and even banterings, of my friends-to find out traces of my prevailing sin, matter for confession. I ought to have a stated day of confession, with fasting-say, once a month. I ought to have a number of scriptures marked, to bring sin to remembrance. I ought to make use of all bodily affliction, domestic trial, frowns of providence on myself, house, parish, church, or country, as calls from God to confess sin. The sins and afflictions of other men should call me to the same. I ought, on Sabbath evenings, and on Communion Sabbath evenings, to be especially careful to confess the sins of holy things. I ought to confess the sins of my confessions-their imperfections, sinful aims, self-righteous tendency, etc.-and to look to Christ as hawing confessed my sins perfectly over His own sacrifice.

"I ought to go to Christ for the forgiveness of each sin. In washing my body, I go over every spot, and wash it out. Should I be less careful in washing my soul? I ought to see the stripe that was made on the back of Jesus by each of my sins. I ought to see the infinite pang thrill through the soul of Jesus equal to an eternity of my hell for my sins, and for all of them. I ought to see that in Christ's blood-shedding there is an infinite over-payment for all my sins. Although Christ did not suffer more than infinite justice demanded, yet He could not suffer at all without laying down an infinite ransom.

"I feel, when I have sinned, an immediate reluctance to go to Christ. I am ashamed to go. I feel as if it would do no good to go-as if it were making Christ a minister of sin, to go straight from the swine-trough to the best robe and a thousand other excuses; but I am persuaded they are all lies, direct from hell. John argues the opposite way: `If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father;' Jeremiah 3:1 and a thousand other scriptures are against it. I am sure there is neither peace nor safety from deeper sin, but in going directly to the Lord Jesus Christ. This is God's way of peace and holiness. It is folly to the world and the beclouded heart, but it is the way.

"I must never think a sin too small to need immediate application to the blood of Christ. If I put away a good conscience, concerning faith I make shipwreck. I must never think my sins too great, too aggravated, too presumptuous-as when done on my knees, or in preaching, or by a dying bed, or during dangerous illness-to hinder me from fleeing to Christ. The weight of my sins should act like the weight of a clock: the heavier it is, it makes it go the faster.

"I must not only wash in Christ's blood, but clothe me in Christ's obedience. For every sin of omission in self, I may find a divinely perfect obedience ready for me in Christ. For every sin of commission in self, I may find not only a stripe or a wound in Christ, but also a perfect rendering of the opposite obedience in my place, so that the law is magnified, its curse more than carried, its demand more than answered.

"Often the doctrine of Christ for me appears common, well known, having nothing new in it; and I am tempted to pass it by and go to some scripture more taking. This is the devil again-a red-hot

lie. Christ for us is ever new, ever glorious. `Unsearchable riches of Christ'-an infinite object, and the only one for a guilty soul. I ought to have a number of scriptures ready, which lead my blind soul directly to Christ, such as Isaiah 45:1-25, Romans 3:1-31.

"2. To be filled with the Holy Spirit, I am persuaded that I ought to study more my own weakness. I ought to have a number of scriptures ready to be meditated on, such as Romans 7:1-25, John 15:1-27, to convince me that I am a helpless worm.

"I am tempted to think that I am now an established Christian-that I have overcome this or that lust so long that I have got into the habit of the opposite grace-so that there is no fear; I may venture very near the temptation-nearer than other men. This is a lie of Satan. I might as well speak of gunpowder getting by habit a power of resisting fire, so as not to catch the spark. As long as powder is wet, it resists the spark; but when it becomes dry, it is ready to explode at the first touch. As long as the Spirit dwells in my heart He deadens me to sin, so that, if lawfully called through temptation, I may reckon upon God carrying me through. But when the Spirit leaves me, I am like dry gunpowder. Oh for a sense of this!

"I am tempted to think that there are some sins for which I have no natural taste, such as strong drink, profane language, etc., so that I need not fear temptation to such sins. This is a lie-a proud, presumptuous lie. The seeds of all sins, are in my heart, and perhaps all the more dangerously that I do not see them.

"I ought to pray and labor for the deepest sense of my utter weakness and helplessness that ever a sinner was brought to feel. I am helpless in respect of every lust that ever was, or ever will be, in the human heart. I am a worm-a beast-before God. I often tremble to think that this is true. I feel as if it would not be safe for me to renounce all indwelling strength, as if it would be dangerous for me to feel (what is the truth) that there is nothing in me keeping me back from the grossest and vilest sin. This is a delusion of the devil. My only safety is to know, feel, and confess my helplessness, that I may hang upon the arm of Omnipotence.... I daily wish that sin had been rooted out of my heart I say, 'Why did God leave the root of lasciviousness, pride, anger, etc., in my bosom? He hates sin, and I hate it; why did He not take it clean away?' I know many answers to this which completely satisfy my judgment, but still I do not feel satisfied. This is wrong. It is right to be weary of the being of sin, but not right to quarrel with my present 'good fight of faith.' . . . The falls of professors into sin make me tremble. I have been driven away from prayer, and burdened in a fearful manner by hearing or seeing their sin. This is wrong. It is right to tremble, and to make every sin of every professor a lesson of my own helplessness; but it should lead me the more to Christ ... If I were more deeply convinced of my utter helplessness, I think I would not be so alarmed when I hear of the falls of other men ... I should study those sins in which I am most helpless, in which passion becomes like a whirlwind and I like a straw. No figure of speech can represent my utter want of power to resist the torrent of sin ... I ought to study Christ's omnipotence more: Hebrews 7:25, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Romans 6:14, Romans 5:9-10, and such scriptures, should be ever before me ... Paul's thorn, 2 Corinthians 12:1-21, is the experience of the greater part of my life. It should be ever before me ... There are many subsidiary methods of seeking deliverance from sins, which must not be neglected-thus, marriage, 1 Corinthians 7:2; fleeing, 1 Timothy 6:11, 1 Corinthians 6:18; watch and pray. Matthew 26:41; the word, 'It is written, It is written.' So Christ defended himself; Matthew 4:1-25. ... But the main defence is casting

myself into the arms of Christ like a helpless child, and beseeching Him to fill me with the Holy Spirit. 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' 1 John 5:4-5 -a wonderful passage.

"I ought to study Christ as a living Saviour more-as a Shepherd, carrying the sheep He finds-as a King, reigning in and over the souls He has redeemed-as a Captain, fighting with those who fight with me, Psalms 35:1-28 as one who has engaged to bring me through all temptations and trials, however impossible to flesh and blood.

"I am often tempted to say, How can this Man save us? How can Christ in heaven deliver me from lusts which I feel raging in me, and nets I feel enclosing me? This is the father of lies again! 'He is able to save unto the uttermost.'

"I ought to study Christ as an Intercessor. He prayed most for Peter, who was to be most tempted. I am on his breastplate. If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million of enemies. Yet the distance makes no difference; He is praying for me.

"I ought to study the Comforter more-his Godhead, his love, his almightiness. I have found by experience that nothing sanctifies me so much as meditating on the Comforter, as John 14:16. And yet how seldom I do this! Satan keeps me from it. I am often like those men who said, They knew not if there be any Holy Ghost ... I ought never to forget that my body is dwelt in by the third Person of the Godhead. The very thought of this should make me tremble to sin; 1 Corinthians 6:1-20 ... I ought never to forget that sin grieves the Holy Spirit-vexes and quenches Him ... If I would be filled with the Spirit, I feel I must read the Bible more, pray more, and watch more.

"3. To gain entire likeness to Christ, I ought to get a high esteem of the happiness of it. I am persuaded that God's happiness is inseparably linked in with His holiness. Holiness and happiness are like light and heat. God never tasted one of the pleasures of sin.

"Christ had a body such as I have, yet He never tasted one of the pleasures of sin. The redeemed, through all eternity, will never taste one of the pleasures of sin; yet their happiness is complete. It would be my greatest happiness to be from this moment entirely like them. Every sin is something away from my greatest enjoyment .. . The devil strives night and day to make me forget this or disbelieve it. He says, Why should you not enjoy this pleasure as much as Solomon or David? You may go to heaven also. I am persuaded that this is a lie-that my true happiness is to go and sin no more.

"I ought not to delay parting with sins. Now is God's time. 'I made haste and delayed not.'. .. I ought not to spare sins because I have long allowed them as infirmities, and others would think it odd if I were to change all at once. What a wretched delusion of Satan that is! "Whatever I see to be sin, I ought from this hour to set my whole soul against it, using all scriptural methods to mortify it-as the Scriptures, special prayer for the Spirit, fasting, watching.

"I ought to mark strictly the occasions when I have fallen, and avoid the occasion as much as the sin itself.

"Satan often tempts me to go as near to temptations as possible without committing the sin. This is fearful, tempting God and grieving the Holy Ghost. It is a deep laid plot of Satan.

"I ought to flee all temptation, according to Proverbs 4:15 Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.' ... I ought constantly to pour out my heart to God, praying for entire conformity to Christ-for the whole law to be written on my heart ... I ought statedly and solemnly to give my heart to God-to surrender my all into His everlasting arms, according to the prayer, Psalms 31:1-24., 'Into thine hand I commit my spirit'-beseeching Him not to let any iniquity, secret or presumptuous, have dominion over me, and to fill me with every grace that is in Christ, in the highest degree that it is possible for a redeemed sinner to receive it, and at all times, till death.

"I ought to meditate often on heaven as a world of holiness-where all are holy, where the joy is holy joy, the work holy work; so that, without personal holiness, I never can be there ... I ought to avoid the appearance of evil. God commands me; and I find that Satan has a singular art in linking the appearance and reality together.

"I find that speaking of some sins defiles my mind and leads me into temptation; and I find that God forbids even saints to speak of the things that are done of them in secret. I ought to avoid this.

"Eve, Achan, David, all fell through the lust of the eye. I should make a covenant with mine, and pray, 'Turn away mine eyes from viewing vanity.' . . . Satan makes unconverted men like the deaf adder to the sound of the gospel. I should pray to be made deaf by the Holy Spirit to all that would tempt me to sin.

"One of my most frequent occasions of being led into temptation is this-I say it is needful to my office that I listen to this, or look into this, or speak of this. So far this is true; yet I am sure Satan has his part in this argument. I should seek divine direction to settle how far it will be good for my ministry, and how far evil for my soul, that I may avoid the latter.

"I am persuaded that nothing is thriving in my soul unless it is growing. 'Grow in grace.' 'Lord, increase our faith.' 'Forgetting the things that are behind.' . . . I am persuaded that I ought to be inquiring at God and man what grace I want, and how I may become more like Christ ... I ought to strive for more purity, humility, meekness, patience under suffering, love. 'Make me Christ-like in all things,' should be my constant prayer. 'Fill me with the Holy Spirit.'

2. Reformation in Secret Prayer.

"I ought not to omit any of the parts of prayer-confession, adoration, thanksgiving, petition, and intercession.

"There is a fearful tendency to omit confession, proceeding from low views of God and his law, slight views of my heart and the sins of my past life. This must be resisted. There is a constant tendency to omit adoration, when I forget to whom I am speaking-when I rush heedlessly into the presence of Jehovah, without remembering His awful name and character-when I have little eyesight for His glory, and little admiration of His wonders. 'Where are the wise?' I have the native tendency of the heart to omit giving thanks. And yet it is specially commanded, Php 4:6. Often when the heart is selfish, dead to the salvation of others, I omit intercession. And yet it especially is the spirit of the great Advocate, who has the name of Israel always on His heart.

"Perhaps every prayer need not have all these; but surely a day should not pass without some space being devoted to each.

"I ought to pray before seeing any one. Often when I sleep long, or meet with others early, and then have family prayer, and breakfast, and forenoon callers, often it is eleven or twelve o'clock before I begin secret prayer. This is a wretched system. It is unscriptural. Christ rose before day, and went into a solitary place. David says, 'Early will I seek Thee; Thou shalt early hear my voice.' Mary Magdalene came to the sepulchre while it was yet dark. Family prayer loses much of its power and sweetness; and I can do no good to those who come to seek from me. The conscience feels guilty, the soul unfed, the lamp not trimmed. Then, when secret prayer comes, the soul is often out of tune. I feel it is far better to begin with God to see his face first-to get my soul near Him before it is near another. 'When I awake I am still with Thee.'

"If I have slept too long, or am going an early journey, or my time is any way shortened, it is best to dress hurriedly, and have a few minutes alone with God, than to give it up for lost.

"But, in general, it is best to have at least one hour alone with God, before engaging in anything else. At the same time, I must be careful not to reckon communion with God by minutes or hours, or by solitude. I have pored over my Bible, and on my knees for hours, with little or no communion; and my times of solitude have been often times of greatest temptation.

"As to intercession, I ought daily to intercede for my own family, connections, relatives, and friends; also for my flock-the believers, the awakened, the careless; the sick, the bereaved; the poor, the rich; my elders, Sabbath school teachers, day-school teachers, children, tract-distributors-that all means may be blessed. Sabbath-day preaching and teaching; visiting of the sick, visiting from house to house; providences, sacraments. I ought daily to intercede briefly for the whole town, the Church of Scotland, all faithful ministers; for vacant congregations, students of divinity, etc.; for dear brethren by name; for missionaries to Jews and Gentiles-and for this end I must read missionary intelligence regularly, and get acquainted with all that is doing throughout the world. It would stir me up to pray with the map before me. I must have a scheme of prayer, also the names of missionaries marked on the map. I ought to intercede at large for the above on Saturday morning and evening from seven to eight. Perhaps also I might take different parts for different days; only I ought daily to plead for my family and flock. I ought to pray in everything. `Be careful for nothing, but in everything ... by prayer and supplication, make your requests known unto God.' Often I receive a letter asking to preach, or some such request. I find myself answering before having asked counsel of God. Still oftener a person calls and asks me something, and I do not ask direction. Often I go out to visit a sick person in a hurry, without asking his blessing, which alone can make the visit of any use. I am persuaded that I ought never to do anything without prayer, and, if possible, special, secret prayer.

"In reading the history of the Church of Scotland, I see how much her troubles and trials have been connected with the salvation of souls and the glory of Christ. I ought to pray far more for our church, for our leading ministers by name, and for my own clear guidance in the right way, that I may not be led aside, or driven aside, from following Christ. Many difficult questions may be forced on us for which I am not fully prepared, such as lawfulness of covenants. I should pray much more in peaceful days, that I may be guided rightly when days of trial come.

"I ought to spend the best hours of the day in communion with God. It is my noblest and most fruitful employment, and is not to be thrust into any corner. The morning hours, from six to eight, are the most uninterrupted, and should be thus employed, if I can prevent drowsiness. A little time

after breakfast might be given to intercession. After tea is my best hour, and that should be solemnly dedicated to God, if possible.

"I ought not to give up the good old habit of prayer before going to bed; but guard must be kept against sleep: planning what things I am to ask is the best remedy. When I awake in the night, I ought to rise and pray, as David and as John Welsh did.

"I ought to read three chapters of the Bible in secret every day, at least.

"I ought on Sabbath morning to look over all the chapters read through the week, and especially the verses marked. I ought to read in three different places; I ought also to read according to subjects, lives," etc.

He has evidently left this unfinished, and now he knows even as he is known. Toward the end of his ministry, he became peculiarly jealous of becoming an idol to his people; for he was loved and revered by many who gave no evidence of love to Christ. This often pained him much. It is indeed right in a people to regard their pastor with no common love (2 Corinthians 9:14), but there is ever a danger ready to arise. He used to say, "Ministers are but the pole; it is to the brazen serpent you are to look." The state of his health would not permit him to be laborious in going from house to house, whereas preaching and evangelistic work in general was less exhausting; but of course, while he was thus engaged, many concerns of the parish would be unattended to; accordingly his Session offered him a stated assistant to help him in his parochial duty. With this proposal he at once concurred. Mr. Gatherer, then at Caraldstone, was chosen, and continued to labor faithfully with him during the remaining days of his ministry. In the beginning of the year he published his Daily Bread, an arrangement of Scripture, that the Bible might be read through in the course of a year. He sought to encourage his people to meditate much on the written word in all its breadth. His last publication was, Another Lily Gathered, or the account of James Laing, a little boy in his flock, brought to Christ early, and carried soon to glory. In the middle of January 1843, he visited Collace, and preached on 1 Corinthians 9:27 : "A Castaway"-a sermon so solemn that one said it was like a blast of the trumpet that would awaken the dead. Next day he rode on to Lintrathen, where the people were willing to give up their work at midday, if he would come and preach to them. All this month he was breathing after glory. In his letters there are such expressions as these: "I often pray, Lord, make me as holy as a pardoned sinner can be made." "Often, often I would like to depart and be with Christ-to mount to Pisgah top and take a farewell look of the church below, and leave my body and be present with the Lord. Ah, it is far better!" Again: "I do not expect to live long. I expect a sudden call some day-perhaps soon, and therefore I speak very plainly." But, indeed, he had long been persuaded that his course would be brief. His hearers remember well how often he would speak in such language as that with which he one day closed his sermon: "Changes are coming; every eye before me shall soon be dim in death. Another pastor shall feed this flock; another singer lead the psalm; another flock shall fill this fold." In the beginning of February, by appointment of the Committee of the Convocation, he accompanied Mr. Alexander of Kirkcaldy to visit the districts of Deer and Ellon districts over which he yearned, for Moderatism had held undisputed sway over them for generations. It was to be his last evangelistic tour. He exemplified his own remark, "The oil of the lamp in the temple burnt away in giving light; so should we."

He set out, says one who saw him leave town, as unclouded and happy as the sky that was above his head that bright morning. During the space of three weeks, he preached or spoke at meetings in twenty-four places, sometimes more than once in the same place. Great impression was made on the people of the district. One who tracked his footsteps a month after his death, states that sympathy with the principles of our suffering church was awakened in many places; but, above all, a thirst was excited for the pure word of life. His eminently holy walk and conversation, combined with the deep solemnity of his preachings, was especially felt. The people loved to speak of him. In one place, where a meeting had been intimated, the people assembled, resolving to cast stones at him as soon as he should begin to speak; but no sooner had he begun, than his manner, his look, his words, riveted them all, and they listened with intense earnestness; and before he left the place, the people gathered around him, entreating him to stay and preach to them. One man, who had cast mud at him, was afterward moved to tears on hearing of his death.

He wrote to Mr. Gatherer, February 14, "I had a nice opportunity of preaching in Aberdeen; and in Peterhead our meeting was truly successful. The minister of St. Fergus I found to be what you described. We had a solemn meeting in his church. In Strichen, we had a meeting in the Independent Meeting-house. On Friday evening, we had two delightful meetings, in a mill at Crechie, and in the church of Clola. The people were evidently much impressed, some weeping. On Saturday evening we met in the Brucklay barn. I preached on Sabbath, at New Deer in the morning, and at Fraserburgh in the evening-both interesting meetings. Tonight we met in Pitsligo church. Tomorrow we trust to be in Aberdour; and then we leave for the Presbytery of Ellon. The weather has been delightful till now. Today the snow is beginning to drift. But God is with us, and He will carry us to the very end. I am quite well, though a little fatigued sometimes." On the 24th, he writes to another friend, "Today is the first we have rested since leaving home, so that I am almost overcome with fatigue. Do not be idle; improve in all useful knowledge. You know what an enemy I am to idleness."

Never was it more felt that God was with him than in this journey. The Lord seemed to show in him the meaning of the text, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). Even when silent, the near intercourse he held with God left its impression on those around. His constant holiness touched the conscience of many.

Returning to his beloved flock on March 1, in good health, but much exhausted, he related the next evening at his prayer meeting, what things he had seen and heard. During the next twelve days he was to be found going out and in among his people, filling up, as his manner was, every inch of time. But he had been much weakened by his unceasing exertions when in the north, and so was more than ordinarily exposed to the typhus fever that was then prevailing in his parish, several cases of which he visited in his enfeebled state. On March 5, the Sabbath he preached three times; and two days later, I find him writing to his father: "All domestic matters go on like a placid stream-I trust not without its fertilizing influence. Nothing is more improving than the domestic altar, when we come to it for a daily supply of soul nourishment." To the last we get glances into his soul’s growth. His family devotions were full of life and full of gladness to the end. Indeed, his manner in reading the chapter reminded you of a man poring into the sands for pieces of fine gold, and from time to time holding up to you what he delighted to have found. On the 12th he preached from Hebrews 9:15 in the forenoon, and Romans 9:22-23, in the afternoon, with uncommon solemnity; and it was observed, both then and on other late occasions, he spoke with unusual

strength on the sovereignty of God. These were his last discourses to his people in St. Peter's. That same evening he went down to Broughty Ferry, and preached on Isaiah 60:1, "Arise, shine," etc. It was the last time he was to be engaged directly in proclaiming Christ to sinners; and as he began his ministry with souls for his hire, so it appears that his last discourse had in it saving power to some, and that rather from the holiness it breathed than from the wisdom of its words. After his death, a note was found unopened, which had been sent to him in the course of the following week, when he lay in the fever. It ran thus: "I hope you will pardon a stranger for addressing to you a few lines. I heard you preach last Sabbath evening, and it pleased God to bless that sermon to my soul. It was not so much what you said, as your manner of speaking that struck me. I saw in you a beauty in holiness that I never saw before. You also said something in your prayer that struck me very much. It was 'Thou knowest that we love Thee.' Oh, sir, what would I give that I could say to my blessed Saviour, 'Thou knowest that I love Thee!'"

Next evening he held a meeting in St. Peter's, with the view of organizing his people for collecting in behalf of the Free Protesting Church-the disruption of the Establishment being now inevitable. He spoke very fervently; and after the meeting felt chilled and unwell. Next morning he felt that he was ill; but he went out in the afternoon to the marriage of two of his flock. He seemed, however, to anticipate a serious attack, for, on his way home, he made some arrangements connected with his ministerial work, and left a message at Dr. Gibson's house, asking him to come and see him. He believed that he had taken the fever, and it was so. That night he lay down on the bed from which he was never to rise. He spoke little, but intimated that he apprehended danger. On Wednesday, he said he thought that he would never have seen the morning, he felt so sore broken, and had got no sleep; but afterward added, "Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil also?" He seemed clouded in spirit, often repeating such passages as-"My moisture is turned into the drought of summer"; -"My bones wax old, through my roaring all day long." It was with difficulty that he was able to speak a few words with his assistant, Mr. Gatherer. In the forenoon, Mr. Miller of Wallacetown found him oppressed with extreme pain in his head. Among other things they talked about on Psalms 126:1-6. On coming to the 6th verse, Mr. McCheyne said he would give him a division of it. 1. What is sowed-"Precious seed." 2. The manner of sowing it - "Goeth forth and weepeth." He dwelled upon "weepeth," and then said, "Ministers should go forth at all times." 3. The fruit - "Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing." Mr. Miller pointed to the certainty of it; Mr. McCheyne assented, "Yes-doubtless." After praying with him, Mr. Miller repeated Matthew 11:28, on which Mr. McCheyne clasped his hands with earnestness. As he became worse, his medical attendants forbade him to be visited. Once or twice he asked for me, and was heard to speak of "Smyrna," as if the associations of his illness there were recalled by his burning fever now. I was not at that time aware of his danger, even the rumor of it had not reached us.

Next day, he continued very ill in body and mind, until about the time when his people met for their usual evening prayer meeting, when he requested to be left alone for half an hour. When his servant entered the room again, he exclaimed, with a joyful voice, "My soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken, and I am escaped." His countenance, as he said this, bespoke inward peace. After that he was observed to be happy; and at supper time that evening, when taking a little refreshment, he gave thanks, "For strength in the time of weakness-for light in the time of darkness-for joy in the time of sorrow-for comforting us in all our

tribulations, that we may be able to comfort those that are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." On the Sabbath, when someone expressed a wish that he be able to go forth as usual to preach, he replied, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, saith the Lord"; and added, "I am preaching the sermon that God would have me to do." On Tuesday (the 21st) his sister repeated to him several hymns. The last words he heard, and the last he seemed to understand, were those of Cowper's hymn, "Sometimes the Light Surprises the, Christian as He Sings." And then the delirium came on. At one time, during the delirium, he said to his attendant, "Mind the text, 1 Corinthians 15:58-'Be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,' "dwelling with much emphasis on the last clause, "for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." At another time he seemed to feel himself among his brethren, and said, "I don't think much of policy in church courts; no, I hate it; but I'll tell you what I like, faithfulness to God, and a holy walk." His voice, which had been weak before, became very strong now; and often he was heard speaking to or praying for his people. "You must be awakened in time, or you will be awakened in everlasting torment, to your eternal confusion." "You may soon get me away, but that will not save your souls." Then he prayed, "This parish, Lord, this people, this whole place!" At another time, "Do it Thyself, Lord, for Thy weak servant." And again, as if praying for the saints, "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me."

Thus he continued to be engaged, while the delirium lasted, either in prayer or in preaching to his people, and always apparently in happy frame, until the morning of Saturday the 25th. On that morning, while his kind medical attendant, Dr. Gibson, stood by, he lifted up his hands as if in the attitude of pronouncing the blessing, and then sank down. Not a groan or a sigh, but only a quiver of the lip, and his soul was at rest. As he was subject to frequent sickness, it was not until within some days prior to his death that serious alarm was generally felt, and hence the stroke came with awful suddeness on us all. That same afternoon, while preparing for Sabbath duties, the news reached me. I hastened down, though scarce knowing why I went. His people that evening met together in the church, and such a scene of sorrow has not often been witnessed in Scotland. It was like the weeping for King Josiah. Hundreds were there; the lower part of the church was full: and none among them seemed able to contain their sorrow. Every heart seemed bursting with grief, so that the weeping and the cries could be heard afar off. The Lord had most severely wounded the people whom He had before so unusually favored; and now, by this awful stroke of His hand, was fixing deeper in their souls all that his servant had spoken in the days of his powerful ministry.

Wherever the news of his departure came, every Christian countenance was darkened with sadness. Perhaps, never was the death of one, whose whole occupation had been preaching the everlasting gospel, more felt by all the saints of God in Scotland. Many of our Presbyterian brethren in Ireland also felt the blow to the very heart. He himself used to say, "Live so as to be missed"; and none that saw the tears that were shed over his death would have doubted that his own life had been what he recommended to others. He had not completed more than twenty-nine years when God took him. On the day of his burial, business was almost suspended in the parish. The streets, and every window, from the house to the grave, were crowded with those who felt that a prince in Israel had fallen; and many a sinful man felt a secret awe creep over his hardened soul as he cast his eye on the solemn spectacle. His tomb may be seen on the pathway at the

northwest corner of St. Peter’s cemetery. He has gone to the "mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense, till the day break and the shadows flee away." His work was finished! His heavenly Father did not have another plant for him to water, nor another vine for him to train; and the Savior who so loved him was waiting to greet him with His own welcome: "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." But what is the voice to us? Has this been sent as the stroke of wrath, or the rebuke of love? "His way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known. Only this much we can clearly see, that nothing was more fitted to leave his character and example impressed on our remembrance forever than his early death. There might be envy while he lived; there is none now. There might have been some of the youthful attractiveness of his graces lost had he lived many years; this cannot be impaired now. It seems as if the Lord had struck the flower from its stem, before any of the colors had lost their bright hue, or any leaf of fragrance.

Well may the flock of St. Peter’s lay it to heart. They have had days of visitation. "Ye have seen the right hand of the Lord plucked out of his bosom? What shall the unsaved among you do in the day of the Lord’s anger?" "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace!"

It has been more than once the lot of Scotland (as was said in the days of Durham) to enjoy so much of the Lord’s kindness, as to have men to lose whose loss has been felt to the very heart-witnesses for Christ, who saw the King’s face and testified of His beauty. We cannot weep them back; but shall we not call on Him with whom is the residue of the Spirit, that before the Lord come, He would raise up men, like Enoch, or like Paul, who shall reach nearer the stature of the perfect man, and bear witness with more power to all nations? Are there not (as he who has left us used to hope) "better ministers in store for Scotland than any that have yet arisen"?

Ministers of Christ, does not the Lord call on us especially? Many of us are like the angel of the church of Ephesus: we have "works, and labor, and patience, and cannot bear them that are evil, and we have borne, and for his name’s sake we labor, and have not fainted"; but we want the fervor of "first love. " Oh how seldom now do we hear of fresh supplies of holiness arriving from the heavenly places (Ephesians 1:3)-new grace appearing among the saints, and in living ministers! We become contented with our old measure and kind, as if the windows of heaven were never to be opened. Few among us see the lower depths of the horrible pit; few ever enter the inner chambers of the house of David. But there has been one among us who, before he had reached the age at which a priest in Israel would have been entering on his course, dwelt at the Mercy seat as if it were his home-preached the certainties of eternal life with an undoubting mind-and spent his nights and days in ceaseless breathings after holiness, and the salvation of sinners. Hundreds of souls were his reward from the Lord, before he left us; and in him have we been taught how much one man may do who will only press farther into the presence of his God, and handle more skillfully the unsearchable riches of Christ, and speak more boldly for his God. We speak much against unfaithful ministers, while we ourselves are very unfaithful! Are we never afraid that the cries of souls whom we have betrayed to perdition through our want of personal holiness, and our defective preaching of Christ crucified, may ring in our ears forever? Our Lord is at the door. In the twinkling of an eye our work will be done. "Awake, awake, 0 arm of the Lord, awake as in the ancient days," until every one of Thy pastors be willing to impart to the flock, over which the Holy Ghost has made him overseer, not the gospel of God only, but also his own soul. And oh that each

one were able, as he stands in the pastures feeding Thy sheep and lambs, to look up and appeal to Thee: "Lord, Thou knowest all things! Thou knowest that I love Thee!"

Chapter 27

05 - Personal Correspondence of Andrew Bonar

These topics are copies of letter from Andrew Bonar to various people over the course of his life.

05. Letter: CRAIGNURE, ISLE OF MULL, 18th August 1882.

Letter: CRAIGNURE, ISLE OF MULL, 18th August 1882.

GLASGOW, 9th April 1883. MY DEAR MISS MARY,

Amidst our Communion services yesterday, we did not fail to remember 'a former member of the congregation now lingering in the valley of the shadow of death.' Nor did we forget yourself, watching by the sick while we were in the Sanctuary and at the Table. When reading at the beginning of the services Psalms 22:1-31., our attention was drawn to Psalms 22:15, as well as Psalms 22:14, the utter weakness of Christ on the Cross. 'My strength is dried up like a potsherd,' not even the faint appearance of moisture left. But even then see what He has! In Psalms 22:19, He claims Jehovah as His strength! 'O my strength, haste Thee to help Me.' Will you tell your dear sister how well Jesus can sympathise with her in her feeling of absolute and utter weakness; but tell her also, how He at the same time whispers, 'Claim as I did, and cry as I did, Jehovah, My strength!'

One word, more especially for yourself, from Job 23:10 : 'He knoweth the way that I take.' He who so often tells in Revelation 2:1-29. and Revelation 3:1-22., 'I know thy works,' is saying to you as really, 'I know the way I am leading you. I have made no mistake, nor has my loving-kindness failed. When I have tried thee, thou shalt come forth as gold.' Your affectionate pastor, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: A friend in Blairgowrie (2)

Letters: A friend in Blairgowrie (2) GLASGOW, 2nd Sept. 1859.

DEAR FOLLOWER OF THE LAMB,

He that believeth shall not make haste. Go on quietly resting in the grace of Jesus, for His grace is like a full well which you may draw from and yet no way exhaust. Sit beside this well, and when your soul is sad because of sin in you, drink of this free love again. Sit beside this well, and when your soul is sad because of sin around you, drink of this well again. Yes, sit there always, and when the coldness of backsliding ones grieves you, drink of this well of free love again! Is it not a cure for every evil? Does it not also put hope and expectation into your soul? Sit there and pray on. Sit there and praise!

Pray for us here. We have some drops from heaven on our pasture.■Yours in the Lord Jesus, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- GLASGOW, 1st January 1875.

DEAR FRIEND,

Thanks for your letter■it is always acceptable, and I try in return to pray for you as you desire. Is not this a word that we may use as Israel did: 'He knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing' (Deuteronomy 2:7). All this is true, and oh, what a comfort is here, 'He knoweth!' for it tells us that He will see to our safety and will order all for our good. And soon now the wilderness will be over. 'Thine eyes (yes, your eyes) shall see the King in His beauty,' and that is the very heart of heaven.

I think Christ grows more and more precious every day■His person, His obedience, His blood, all, all in Him. O to know His heart of love, and to be able to love Him as He has loved us; I mean, to love Him with all our heart, as He loves us with all His heart.

. . . Let this be our watchword this year, 'Grow in grace!'

'The Lord is at hand!'

Yours truly in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: A friend in the country (1)

Letters: A friend in the country (1) MY DEAR SIR,

I have been too long in replying to your welcome letter. Do you think letters ever passed between the families of Moses and Jethro? Would not Moses or his son Gershom write occasionally to their friends in Midian, and tell of the wilderness journey?

Suppose the following letter from Gershom to his grandfather Jethro : 'Peace be to thee from Jehovah, God of heaven and earth! Wonder not if I am like a heath in the desert such as we see daily here, or like one of the sunburnt and time-worn rocks that occasionally meet our view.'

'Alas, grandfather, I am a stranger in a strange land, and my heart often wanders back to the fields where you taught me to worship Jehovah among the flocks of sheep, at the well at which you used to tell, my father first met my mother. I hope you are not forgetting us, who are often up and often down, sometimes getting a day's rest at such a well as Elim, sometimes moving over arid sand. My father is much tried by the people, but I think every day's provocation makes him meeker than ever, though he does not himself see it, and often sighs for deliverance. Our health is, on the whole, good; we have a good deal to try it, heat by day, frost by night, hot winds, flinty soil, and such other annoyances. But our foot swells not, and, wonderful to tell, our raiment is not exhausted! our shoes not worn out! our manna still at our tent-door every morning, and our guardian Pillar-Cloud above us! Help us to praise, and join us in praying that we may soon see that goodly mountain and Lebanon!'

Jethro replies: 'My son, the messenger who travelled by the way of the Amalekites arrived here and brought us tidings of you all'.

'But, my son, do ye often enough rejoice in the Lord alone, and forget the desert? Do you not remember your father's remarkable words about the sacrifice, how he told us of the glimpse he got of its meaning? He saw Jehovah Himself preparing to die! I have never been able to get this thought for a moment out of my mind. Herein indeed is love! Since then Midian has been to me far less than it was, for from Midian I am now looking to the bosom of Jehovah. Do the same, my son, and the desert will daily be forgotten. And you know how He is very near you in yonder Pillar-Cloud, and His face smiles on you at yonder ark and mercy-seat, from the highest Glory! There was a dark parable too, which your father spoke, about Jehovah gathering us all together at last in some glorious city, when Shiloh shall be there too! I often try to comfort myself with these thoughts. But my heart longs for more light and truth!'

Dear brother, pilgrims have been always pilgrims, and the desert always has been the desert, but Christ is always Christ, 'the same yesterday' when John lay on His bosom, and 'to-day' when you and I may do the same, 'and for ever,' when at His coming we shall know and feel all the bliss of being one with Him!

05. Letters: A schoolboy in London (1)

Letters: A schoolboy in London (1) GLASGOW, 20 INDIA STREET, 21st October 1873. MY DEAR WALTER,

I wonder how your soul prospers? You know we can go on busily with work, and all the more busily, when enjoying the sunshine round us■it makes all so cheerful. It is even thus with us in our souls when realising the presence of God in Christ, when we know that He is 'beholding us with a pleasant countenance' (Psalms 11:7, the metre version), whether we are sitting in the house, or walking by the way, or studying a lesson, or writing a letter.

'Continue ye in My love '(John 15:9); 'Keep yourselves in the love of God' (Jude 1:21). And if you say 'How am I to keep myself in His love?' the answer is, by keeping near the Cross, never suffering anything to intercept the view of that glorious, gracious, infinitely great manifestation of God's holy love to sinners. And again, it is said in John 15:10, 'If ye keep My commandments ye shall abide in My love.' The Holy Spirit will assuredly keep you in that sunshine if you are in the path of duty, though you may not be directly meditating on divine things. When you are giving diligence to get on in study, and are very busy writing exercises or the like, this is 'keeping His commandments' if done as part of duty, and so you go on from hour to hour of your work with a light and happy heart, 'continuing in His love.' 'May the God of peace give you peace always by all means.' dia pantos en panti tropoi (2 Thessalonians 3:16).

Yours truly in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: A servant in his congregation (1)

Letters: A servant in his congregation (1) CRAIGNURE, ISLE OF MULL, 6th August 1884.

DEAR MARGARET,

I was greatly surprised on receiving your letter. But I suppose you were yourself taken altogether unawares. This comfort, however, you have, sure and full, viz., that E. has only gone to 'the mountain of myrrh and hill of frankincense' for a season, and then shall come back with Christ in immortal health, soul and body. You can think of her every day as 'with Christ' in the Paradise above, enjoying blessedness to which we here are strangers, and you may be sure that the Lord intends for you some peculiar blessing by this sore bereavement. What a word that is in Hebrews 12:10 : affliction sent not only that we may get some profit by it, but 'that we may be partakers of His holiness.'

I shall try to remember your afflicted parents as well as yourself When you return to town will you let me know, that I may call ?

Believe me, your affectionate pastor, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: His niece in school at Kelso (1)

Letters: His niece in school at Kelso (1) GLASGOW, 14th December 1874. MY DEAR NIECE EMILY,

It was very good in you to write me so nice a letter. It was well written every way, and makes me think you are already greatly the better of being away from home, breathing your native air. Your great-grandfather never saw Kelso, but I am sure he would have rejoiced to see his descendant, who is so like him in form and feature, walking by the banks of the Tweed and Teviot, and storing her mind with solid learning and precious truth. I enclose a little book (not so big as a Christian Treasury, nor so attractive as Hymns of Faith and Hope, but) containing a brief history of this year's awakening. Perhaps it will interest you. 'The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all that have pleasure in them.' Dear Emily, every day look to Calvary, and to the Right Hand of the Throne, to see there the Lord Jesus 'crowned with glory and honour.' Every time our soul 'touches' Him, there comes virtue out of Him, to heal and strengthen. Your cousins here are all well and send their love to you. . . . Your affectionate uncle, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: His son James (2)

Letters: His son James (2) GLASGOW, 14th Feby. 1873. MY DEAR JAMES,

I have this week been lighting upon some passages in the poets that seemed to me to illustrate, or, rather, to put in a good setting, some truths that are usually stated in Bible language. Reading a little of Carey's 'Dante' (which is not always free from obscurity), I found these lines that seemed to me to describe well the first indistinct discovery of Christ's grace to a soul:

'Call to remembrance, reader, if thou e'er Hast on a mountain-top been ta'en by cloud, Through which thou saw'st no better than the mole Doth through opacous membrane; then whene'er The watery vapours dense began to melt Into thin air, how faintly the sun's sphere Seemed wading through them. So thy nimble thought May image how at first I re-beheld The sun.' And here is Byron's way of putting 'the end of such mirth is sadness'■

Joy's recollection is no longer joy' ; and then he adds, in his own tone of sadness■

'But sorrow's memories are sorrows still.'

Well, these are scraps of a literary kind in return for your interesting account of Stirling's book and your conversation with Kahnis. . . . Now, I must away to my studies for Sabbath. When you are reading a letter from home, or when your mind has been interested in the book before you, you have felt what Dante says when he checked his eager listening and proceeded onward in his survey- 'I drew the sponge yet thirsty from the wave.'

. . Every blessing be yours for time and eternity. Your affectionate father, ANDREW A. BONAR.

'Vespera jam venit; nobiscum, Christe, maneto, Extingui lucem nec patiare tuam.' - (Old Latin Hymn.) ---------- GLASGOW, 22nd Feb.1881. MY DEAR JAMES,

I have perused with considerable care your Parson Malthus, and I like it much. Your style is striking in its epigrammatic brevity. There is at times a want of clearness perhaps, arising from your condensing too much, and at other times from your evidently trusting to your reader's previous knowledge of the subject. On the whole, it seems to me likely to help you on in the judgment of those who can appreciate the subject. I found it interesting as well as able.

You will be much gratified by the notice of it in The Mail. . . . We are all well. To-night I have my annual tea- meeting of my Bible classes. Your affectionate father, ANDREW A. BONAR.

P. S. What do you mean by 'having a Herodotean fear of nemesis' ? This is a heathenish fear. Faith in Him who giveth without upbraiding knows nothing of it.

05. Letters: Isabella, his daughter (1)

Letters: Isabella, his daughter (1) Tuesday, 2nd April 1867. MY DEAR ISABELLA,■. . . This is a week of many interruptions of course, people calling about the Communion, etc. . . . No news here. The stream of life glides on, and we are on its banks. It will take many turns and windings, and then, some day, what a view bursts upon us! Eternity! Dr. Livingstone's death seems to us strange■so like a mere accident■to die in such a way! But this is often God's way of ordering and bringing about great events, while He Himself is there, so that not a hair of the head falls to the ground without Him. I hope little N. is better. Poor Miss M. and her sister must be suffering much anxiety. Few things are so trying as anxiety from day to day, and that is the reason why Christ the Sin-bearer is also the Burden-bearer. He is thus a full Saviour.

I finished this afternoon my Ladies Class for the season. Our subject was 'Peace,' and all said about it, and about the way God gives it. . . . Good-bye.

■Your affectionate father, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: Miss Anne Whittit (2)

Letters: Miss Anne Whittit (2) GLASGOW, 19th March 1873.

DEAR MISS ANNE,

■Many thanks for your narrative of the Lord's doings. I was so interested that I just told all over at my prayer-meeting, with a few remarks as I went along. You see the Master has not cast you aside. You are not treated as even Jonathan (holy, humble Jonathan) was treated; for after he had been used to take the garrison and rout an army■ 'one chasing a thousand'■you remember he was put in the background (the safest place! for spiritual pride does not flourish so well in the shade), and you hear of no other great exploit done by him. Nay, he had so far lost his first faith that he could not face Goliath, though once he faced a host. Be thankful, then, that the Master is using you still. Go on, from strength to strength. It will not be long before 'He shines out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,' and those who have won souls shall stand very near Him.

Hillhead is quiet. Believers still believe, and seek to be of use to others. . . . Pray for us in Finnieston. There are only now among us two families of the Hillhead people . . . so that I do not see or hear so much as I used to do of your old vineyard. With kindest regards to Mrs. Sandeman, whose heart will be enlarged at the work in Perth, ■Yours in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

P.S.■Write again whenever you have such good news to tell. What is the name of the lane where the old woman stays? and what is her name? The Bible tells us the name of the street where Ananias found Saul of Tarsus.

GLASGOW, 21st November 1878.

DEAR MISS ANNE,■No fear of any one robbing you of spiritual food so long as you do not steal from poor Israel, and bring down to the Kingdom of grace what belongs to the Kingdom of glory.

Many thanks for the 'green and tender grass' you send a handful of! The Lord's own bosom ('the bosom of the Father,' Christ's own place, not the beloved disciple's place, but the beloved Master's place) is in very truth His 'tender mercies,' and the 'tender grass' of the green pastures. Do you know I have been thinking that the Lord makes our earth His heaven! For is it not written, 'My delights were with the sons of men' ?

What a pleasant interesting case that is which you relate. Go on, sowing and reaping, working and praying, and praising. . . . Pray for us here. Our new church is to be opened D. V., on 1st December, just twenty-two years since the old one was opened. How many things have passed since then! Your Jordanhill friends began a prayer-meeting that very day, and it has gone on to this hour! Hallelujah.

■Yours truly in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR. May 'Elmbank' be at all times to you 'Elim-bank.'

05. Letters: Miss Clarke, Edinburgh (1)

Letters: Miss Clarke, Edinburgh (1) CRAIGNURE, ISLE OF MULL, 18th August 1882.

DEAR MISS C.,

■It was very kind in you to let me know of your sister's illness. She is safe in any case in 'the everlasting arms'. During all her time of trial and pain, the same Holy Spirit who upheld and comforted Christ our Head, even on the Cross and its agonies, will assuredly uphold and comfort one of His members. Nor will He forget you. I don't know whether or not Mary was called to watch at Bethany over a suffering and dying sister ('Martha, whom Jesus loved'), but I am sure that the Saviour looked down from His Father's right hand on them both, with the same love and sympathy which He showed when their brother was sick.

I would like to see you both, but I am at present away with my family in this far-off island, and I do not think I can be in Edinburgh for a long time to come.

Meanwhile, praying for the presence of the Lord with you continually (remember■' I will water it every moment, I will keep it night and day')■

Believe me, yours truly in Him who 'knows our frame.'

ANDREW A. BONAR.

Chapter 38

05. Letters: Miss Macphun, Zenana Mission, Benares, India (1)

Letters: Miss Macphun, Zenana Mission, Benares, India (1) GLASGOW, Sept 1st, 1888. MY DEAR MISS MACPHUN,■We are to 'rejoice with those that do rejoice,' as well as to sympathise with those that weep, and so I wish to-day to join with you in praises and thanks. You have been getting much to gladden you, even in that one case you so kindly send me the details of. Yours is the joy of Luke 15:7, something peculiarly heavenly in it; and it cannot fail to help you in your work, for 'the joy of the Lord is your strength.'

We are always glad to hear of you and from you. Your Zenana work interests us all. The other evening (it was a Wednesday prayer-meeting) it was proposed to have special prayer for all who had gone out from among us to labour among the heathen and the Jews, and you were not forgotten in these prayers. Our Sabbath-school has been blessed since the beginning of the year in several ways, specially in the case of the older lads in the classes, some of them among the roughest and least likely. The Lord likes to remind us that 'His arm is not shortened that it cannot save, nor His ear heavy that it cannot hear,' and that the Cross has not lost its power for salvation. Do you not more and more find that the Holy Spirit uses nothing so much as the truth concerning the atoning blood for drawing souls? He said long ago, 'If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me,' and we at home here, as well as you abroad, are ourselves blessed every time we look to the Brazen Serpent, and are made from time to time to rejoice in seeing the Holy Spirit fixing the eye of the awakened sinner on this great sight!

I daresay I need not say 'Pray for us,' for I am sure you do. Nor need you wonder that we are covetous of prayer on our behalf, for was not Paul insatiable in this respect? always in his Epistles telling his friends how he prayed for them and how he expected them to 'continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving,' adding now and then, 'withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ.' My daughters are all well, and join with me in sending kindest regards.

■Yours truly in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: Mr. D. Maclagan (1)

Letters: Mr. D. Maclagan (Gives some interesting details about his time as a missionary with R.S. Candlish)(1) This letter was written to Mr. Maclagan, who was compiling the 'History of St.George's,' in 1874, and is included in this.

These excerpts have been taken from 'Memorials of Robert Smith Candlish,' D.D., by William Wilson, D.D. (1880)

5th March, 1874

"It was November 1836 that I came from Jedburgh (where I had been for eighteen months partly as a friend and partly as a missionary with Mr. Purves) to be missionary in St. George's parish. So far as I can remember I was the first missionary. Rose Street and William Street (the schoolroom in each of those streets furnished a place of meeting) were the backbone of my mission district. The hostlers in those streets formed part of my charge; there was a service for them at four o'clock on Sabbath afternoon, and sometimes there might be four, sometimes twelve, sometimes twenty, or even more, who came.

Occasionally Dr. Candlish preached in the schoolrooms referred to. When about to begin my work I asked him, 'Will you tell me how I shall go about visiting here, and what meetings I should hold on week day and Sabbath?' In his own way he replied, 'I'll tell you nothing. Find out for yourself what may be best. Your way will be opened up for you.' And so I was entirely free to do less or more, and to take any way I pleased. He liked me to call upon him in a morning now and then (he was not so busy then) to report anything going on in the district. If I had a case of sickness that seemed to fall to his hand more than mine (e.g. some member of the congregation) I was welcome to call even on Saturday ; and sometimes he most kindly told me what his lecture was to be, and would say, 'Now, does this look fanciful?' or something to that effect."

"As to incidents, it would require a little more time than I can get, I fear, to recall anything of real interest to you.

He introduced me to my charge at Collace, preaching on 2 Corinthians 5:11 : 'Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.' That day, his sermon shook the self-confidence of an old lady who came to hear, and filled her with concern. In those days his love for Robert M'Cheyne was very interesting. You know how it was his anxiety for Robert M'Cheyne's health that led to the idea of the mission to the Jews, and the visit to Palestine. I have the first draft of the petition to the Assembly to undertake a mission to the Jews in Dr. Candlish's handwriting."

05. Letters: Mr. David Dickson, his brother-in-law (1)

Letters: Mr. David Dickson, his brother-in-law (1) ABERNYTE, Saturday, 3rd August 1867. MY DEAR DAVID,■Your note was another cloud in our sky. I thought you had got better accounts of your dear boy. But if the Lord is indeed threatening to let him continue with you only for a short time, be assured that all the while 'He doth not willingly afflict.' There must be some real and special blessing on its way to Charlotte and you, and what if this illness be, after all, rather to quicken you both in prayer. Remember 'He made as though He would go farther,' all in order to draw out the desire and get expression of their importunate earnestness from the disciples.

I will try to keep you much in mind, asking for Jamie, whether spared longer or shorter time, the faith of a boy of his own age of whom I heard here. The boy calmly spoke of his Saviour and pointed upwards. 'My place is ready.' And then as his father held his hand, 'Father, you must let my hand go, and take hold of Christ's instead.'

Dear Charlotte, 'He knoweth our frame.'

■Your affectionate brother, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: Mr. Lewis Grant, his nephew, Kirkcaldy (1)

Letters: Mr. Lewis Grant, his nephew, Kirkcaldy (1) GLASGOW, 16th January 1880. MY DEAR LEWIS,

■Your note has just come with its burden of heavy tidings. I had written an hour ago to Uncle William, whose letter expressed anxious alarm, but we were not prepared for your announcement, for Willie's note of yesterday was rather encouraging and hopeful.

You know, and we all know, that as to your beloved mother, Christ was all her confidence. She rested in Him, and has now entered into a deeper rest with Him. But how fragrant will her memory ever be! Her most unselfish care for all of us, her innumerable kindnesses, as well as her prayers and sympathy■all will be missed, and felt to be missing, by all her many friends.

'I was dumb, because Thou didst it.' With kindest love to all with you■all alike under the dark cloud, but yet able to look beyond it.■ Your affectionate uncle, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: Mr. Robert Noble, Clapham (1)

Letters: Mr. Robert Noble, Clapham (1) GLASGOW, 14th Dec. 1891. MY DEAR MR. NOBLE,■You sympathise with us, I know, though far off; and so I write to tell you of another stroke on our congregation. Last week George Jackson, (an elder in Finniston Church for many years) who to the last was always with us in spirit, if not in presence, was laid in the grave; but we did not think that another bereavement was near. William Ralston died (also one of Dr. Bonar's elders, and well known in connection with his work in the Bethany Hall) on Saturday evening! Influenza and erysipelas combined carried him off after only four or five days illness. What a useful life he lived! what a calm rest he now enjoys! what a bright crown awaits him in the day of Christ! I feel as I suppose John the Apostle felt in his old age■all his fellow-disciples gone before him. But I have no visions in my old age,■ only I pray much (O you, brother, must help me in this) for what Paul calls the 'Spirit of wisdom and revelation (it is "apocalypse ") in the knowledge of Christ.'

Remember me and mine. We are in health as a family, but on every side sickness is to be met with among our congregation. . . . Your brother in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Christ, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: Mr. Robert Young Edinburgh (1)

Letters: Mr. Robert Young Edinburgh (1) AFTER MRS. BONAR'S DEATH GLASGOW, 17th Oct. 1864. MY DEAR MR. YOUNG,

■This has been an awfully sudden and solemn stroke. All went well till the afternoon of Friday■nothing indeed to startle us till about six o'clock, and in three hours all was over. . . . During the three hours she was at last only half-conscious■no pain at all■but rapid breathing and restlessness. Not long before she passed away I said, 'I know you are leaning on Jesus.' She tried gently to speak, but in vain, and soon the breathing became lower and lower, till she sank, we believe, into the arms of Him who loved her more than any of us ever did, for He gave Himself for her. It is bewildering still■so sudden. . . . O how stunning the thought from time to time, 'Isabella gone!' What an awful blank! for there could not be a happier home than she made mine to be. But the Lord has said, 'Them that sleep in Jesus He will bring with Him.' O that the day were come! . . . I know how Mrs. Young will feel. It is the quenching of a long and happy friendship till it be relighted up in Glory. You will both pray for me and mine. We need it■for it would be bitterer still were we to suffer all this in vain. Will you ask that the children may know (and I also) what that means, 'When . . . mother leaves me the Lord will take me up,' ■becoming Himself mother in every way, and Himself taking her place to do and to be all.■Yours truly, my dear Mr. Young, ANDREW A. BONAR.

Chapter 44

05. Letters: Mr. Wikinson at the Mildmay Mission to the Jews (1)

Letters: Mr. Wikinson at the Mildmay Mission to the Jews (1) GLASGOW, November 8th 1881 MY DEAR MR. WILKINSON,

Last night I was present with Mr. Baron at a most interesting meeting of Jews, fifteen in number, and could at once see that the stagnant waters had been stirred by Mr. Baron's visit. I am very thankful that you have been able to make an impression and a good beginning.

Yours be the blessing, from Israel's true Aaron.

Numbers 6:24-26. and may I come in for a share of the blessing too as one who truly loves Israel.

Dr. Andrew Bonar

05. Letters: Mr. William Bonar his brother (1)

Letters: Mr. William Bonar his brother (1) COLLACE, Tuesday Morning. (probably written about 1845) MY DEAR WILLIAM,

■Here is a neat plan of Jerusalem and the country round, to which I have added a few names. By means of it you may 'walk about Zion and tell the towers thereof,' just as you do at Morningside to the towers of Edinburgh Castle. As you come up from Bethlehem and go in at the 'Zion-gate,' you may sing one of your hymns: - 'Pilgrim burden'd with thy sin, Come thy way to Zion-gate,' etc.

Notice where I have put up a cross. I think it was thereabouts that Calvary stood■not at all where they now show the Holy Sepulchre. Notice also Scopus. It was the camp of Titus when he first of all came to besiege the city.

Now, dear William, wander up and down and round about Jerusalem. It is fine fresh air. Climb the Mount of Olives and visit Bethany on the other side. Drink in all the truths they will suggest. 'Jesus Christ the same ... to-day.'

There are two mistakes in the plan. The Mount of Olives is made too low a great deal at the one extremity, and there ought to be not a smooth plain but a deep valley between Aceldama and the hill of Zion. The deep valley was Gehenna■the valley of the son of Hinnom. May you meet the King as you wander in these holy spots. May you meet the Man of Sorrows in Gethsemane, and may you be met by Melchizedec■ the true Melchizedec■in the King's dale, the valley of Jehoshaphat. See, also, to get a drink at the Pool of Siloam, and eat a little of the ears of barley that grow on Mount Zion, at the spot marked No. 27, where we plucked some six years ago. The above is my prescription for an invalid■ Jerusalem. air, Siloam water, Zion barley; and you may add Gethsemane olives. They will do you no harm.■ Your affectionate brother, ANDREW A. BONAR.

P.S.■When you are done with Jerusalem, journey on to Collace. You know Collace-hill is very like the hill of Samaria.

05. Letters: Mr. William Dickson Edinburgh (5)

Letters: Mr. William Dickson Edinburgh (5) COLLACE, Oct. 6th, 1846. MY DEAR FRIEND,

■I have this moment got a refreshing word which being a piece of the Bread of Life I may share with you. It is Ruth 1:21: 'The Almighty hath afflicted me.' The word 'Almighty' is John Bunyan's word 'Shaddai,' the 'All-sufficient One.' Now, see, Naomi feels smitten down by His right hand and upheld by His left, for she says, 'I am afflicted, left destitute, by One who is Himself sufficient to make up for all.' You hear the sweet sound of the stream of comfort that is flowing through her afflicted soul in that word, 'All-sufficient One!' 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee,' etc. Do you not observe that the Lord is remarkably gracious and wise in His consolations to you, inasmuch as He is at present so peculiarly impressing your young people? It was thus He comforted me very specially at Mr. M'Cheyne's death. He gave me that year five or six souls, I believe, all about the season when that stroke came. And thus it is He seems to say: 'It is things spiritual that are to supply the place of things seen and temporal.' Even your increased duties in the way of business have this meaning. They lift off your mind from many things in your affliction that otherwise would have been ever recurring to you, and they seem to say, 'You must have more grace now to stand against the wear of business■you must test the fulness of the Lord not only for comfort but for holiness.'

It will hold up my hands a little on the Saturday to know that you and some of your flock have prayed for me. But often do I find God teaching me that it is only when He Himself pleases that any utterance is given. . . . Believe me, yours truly, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- COLLACE, Friday, Jan. 1847. MY DEAR FRIEND,

■I wrote you a hurried note yesterday from Perth, but on reading yours to me again I cannot resist writing more fully to-day. Our Master may use a word to refresh you. You speak of times when soul and body are so wearied that 'you cannot read the Word or pray with life,' when you come in in the evenings. Well, I can tell you something worse than this in a minister's experience. There was a time when he used to be thus worn out by working in spiritual duties so that all relish for the truth was ready to die. I have gone to classes and come home to family worship in this miserable frame. But now I perceive that there was a great deal of legalism in this state. I used to feel as if I were punished by our Father for not keeping my soul in a better frame, and this idea made me careless of trying to get immediate refreshment in the Word and by prayer, for the secret suspicion of the Lord's fatherly displeasure made this look hopeless. Then the Lord taught me also to remember Psalms 1:2, and, by keeping one word of His own on my spirit all day, I have often since been kept from withering. Just a few days ago I had to ride after breakfast six miles off to visit, and scarcely got home in time to have ten minutes for dinner, when the hour of a teachers meeting struck, and to this I had to go, and then from that to another. But that morning I had got this word, Hosea 3:1: 'The love of the Lord toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods,' etc., and this grain of grace, this particle of the fine wheat, this love to the ungrateful, so continually recurred

to my soul that that day was a happy day amid its bustle. I daresay you will say, 'This is just my experience, too, but you do not know how business engrosses mind and memory.' True, brother, and all I meant by telling you I what is familiar to your own experience is just to keep you in mind of the way in which your trials may be borne. Keep a grape of Eshcol beside you, and moisten your parched palate with it when you can ; and, if you cannot get time for this, then surely your Heavenly Father can refresh you without it. You have been working for Him all day. Go home singing of His love to you that needed not your efforts to draw it forth, nor any service directly done to His name. I shall pray for this for you, and expect to hear that often at mid-day you are walking among the trees of life, by the side of the river from the throne of God and the Lamb. Do you try to praise often, when all other things seem dull to you? . . . Do you ever remember my poor flock when you are getting near the High Priest? . . . 'Peace be to you and love with faith.' ■Yours affectionately, dear friend, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- COLLACE, Dec.14th, 1847. MY DEAR WILLIAM,

■Thanks for your note announcing your safe arrival . . . You did not say how you found all at home■you took that for granted. But, remember, this is one of the little things that friends like to hear. Was it not one of the domestic sympathies that Paul cherished?

I was led lately to notice that though writing the all-important Epistle to the Romans, so solemn and so searching, and all under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost who was still filling the room with His presence, yet Paul was led to ask (see chap.16) 'Any message to Rome? I am just closing my letter.' Timothy said, 'Send my kind regards.' Jason and Lucius and Sosipater, all three said, 'And send ours too.' Just at that moment Gaius came in. 'Any word, Gaius, to Rome?' 'O yes, remember me to them all.' A knock came to the door, and the soldier that kept guard introduced 'The chamberlain of the city■Erastus.' Paul says, 'Well, I am just sending off a letter to our friends in Rome, Erastus; shall I send your salutation?' 'By all means, give them my kind love.' . . .

Salute all at your house (I must not forget my own lesson). Write soon.■Yours affectionately, dear William, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- COLLACE, May 16th, 1848. MY DEAR WILLIAM,■Isabella's note would tell you that it seemed best not to come in this week . . . and when I saw that the forenoon meetings for prayer were to be only for a single hour each day I felt far less regret ■although, it is true, one hour might make Jericho fall, were faith in its mountain-removing exercise. . . . I got your Ayrshire paper. Did you notice one thing in it about the 'Singing Valley' ? It is a valley in America covered over with loose fragments of broken stones and shingle, and when a morning breeze passes over it you may hear most melodious sounds issuing from all parts of it. Think of this as an emblem. A broken spirit's debris or loose fragments may send forth sweet melody when the Spirit breathes over the valley. This soul of loose, broken thoughts and feelings, shattered joys, shivered hopes, smooth-worn cares, becomes an AEolian harp in the Spirit's hand. Have you never felt this? Perhaps others have heard the melody from this extraordinary 'Singing Valley' when you did not know. Every traveller wonders at that phenomenon in America, but even angels wonder at a pilgrim's songs■at the sweet sounds that issue from New Jerusalem broken stones. . . .■Your affectionate brother, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- NEWCASTLE, Saturday, 1850. MY DEAR WILLIAM,■I am not the author of these lines on the Jews. Alas! my harp has never been taken down from the willows, (The only verses of poetry he ever wrote appeared in articles on the Twelve Tribes, which he contributed to The Scattered Nation in 1866.) though I expect it to be when 'the tongue of the dumb shall sing.' I cannot state who is the author. Ask my sister, if you can see her, to look in some of her books . . . May the King give you 'the pen of the ready writer' to write in His praise. As for dear Hewitson, 'We sorrow not as those who have no hope.' The Lord will bring him to us again when He brings us Christ again. 'Therefore, comfort one another with these words.' But who will fill up the gap ?■Your affectionate brother, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: Mr. and Mrs. James Bonar, Hampstead (1)

Letters: Mr. and Mrs. James Bonar, Hampstead (1) GLASGOW, 29th May 1889.

Very many thanks to my son and daughter for their congratulations to me on my birthday! And let me say specially to Mary that the sweet fragrance of both words and flowers is filling my study to-day, and from time to time sending my thoughts away to Hampstead. My prayers also go up for both of you from time to time, perhaps oftener than you think. At breakfast this morning I was reminding the company . . . that when Moses entered on his eightieth year he was only beginning his best work. May it be so with your affectionate father, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: Mrs. Grant his sister-in-law, on the death of her husband, the Rev. Wm. Grant...

Letters: Mrs. Grant his sister-in-law, on the death of her husband, the Rev. Wm. Grant of Cavers (1) ON THE DEATH OF HER HUSBAND, THE REV. WM. GRANT OF CAVERS.

COLLACE, Oct. 18th, 1853. MY DEAR JEANIE,

■ 'The heart knoweth its own bitterness.' You have felt this and have experienced how powerless are words, however well-meant and kind, to relieve such affliction as yours. It is only the Lord that can so speak to the heart as to comfort. Do you know (look at the margin) that such expressions as 'Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem' are 'speak to the heart of Jerusalem,' and who can do this but the Lord? One thing you will feel tempted to■not perhaps to think hard thoughts of the Lord, but to think so often of the trial as to overlook in part the design of it as to your personal feelings toward Jesus as a Saviour. When the Lord makes your portion of earth assume so wintry an aspect, it is in order to make you see the eternal summer sunshine in the heavenly places in Christ. Have you felt it profitable to go, not as a sorrowful one, not as one needing the Widow's Judge, but as a sinful one, a corrupt one, one whom God needs to try, one whose sin exposes her to chastisement, to go thus to the blood and righteousness of Jesus? Clothe yourself in His obedience, rest yourself on His satisfying death. There was no fault, no defect, in His obedience under suffering. That, then, is your covering, imputed to you, and under that robe look up to Him and ask Him to visit you with the consolations He felt as man when His reputed father Joseph died, when His much-loved friend the Baptist was removed■when He thought on bereaved Martha and Mary.■Believe me, dear Jeanie, your affectionate brother, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: Mrs. Horatius Bonar his sister-in-law (2)

Letters: Mrs. Horatius Bonar his sister-in-law (2) GLASGOW, 28th Oct. 1864. MY DEAR JANE,

■Perhaps you and Horace will excuse me for not writing sooner. It requires something to raise me before I can at present take up the pen. The bewilderment is passing away■all appears too real now, but the loneliness, when will that pass away? I know 'He doth not willingly afflict,' ■I have felt that■for, though the Lord saw that He must send the stroke, He has not failed, when it was over, to relieve the wound by many means. I am sure many have prayed for me. I have got many most helpful letters of sympathy, all which are sufficient to assure me that the Elder Brother's heart feels for me in infinite love.

Tell Horace I have tried to glean something in his fields, The Night of Weeping-. But oh! Jane, when I look back on the sixteen years of happy, happy home-life, and when I take up some letter or paper or anything else that recalls past days of peace and most helpful affection, all I can say is, that the Lord who so filled my cup, and then in a moment dashed it to the ground, must be dealing in fatherly love, and must be doing even this in the depths of His compassion for me. 'It is the Lord.'

Let us live with all our might for the Lord. My dear Isabella could not bid me farewell■was it meant as if to intimate 'no need of farewell, the time of separation is so short.' Do not forget my motherless children. How she cared for them! I never knew one who was more led to tell the Lord all little cares and difficulties, and more habitually made conscience of little things in the family. Mrs. Grant and her daughter have been most useful and kind to us. . . .

We are looking forward to the baptism [of the motherless baby] on Sabbath eight days.

■Your affectionate brother,

ANDREW A. BONAR ---------- GLASGOW, 22nd June 1870. MY DEAR JANE,

■I can quite sympathise with your sadness when the flowers in the garden recall Kitty and her cheerful, happy ways. The very beauty and bloom help to deepen the melancholy feeling which weighs down the soul as you remember the absent one whose presence was sunshine, and for whom the garden seemed to blossom. But it is written, 'Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us■glory, while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things which are unseen.' May I not adopt the language of John, and say, 'I heard a voice from heaven saying, there is present rest for the aching heart in beholding the Lamb slain, and holding fellowship with Him.'. . .

Kindest love to all.

■Your affectionate brother, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: Mrs. James Bonar, his daughter-in-law (1)

Letters: Mrs. James Bonar, his daughter-in-law (1) GLASGOW, 29th Decr. 1884. MY DEAR MARY,■

'Along the river of time we glide, The swiftly flowing resistless tide !'

Only think! the year is nearly done, and I have lived seventy-four years in this world, and must be getting near the edge of the wilderness. But the prospect on before is very bright■the sadness is all in looking back. The more we know of Christ here, the more of heaven we enjoy here. May you and James have many a year of peace and usefulness! May 1885 be the best and happiest you have known. . . . Was it you or James that designed the post-card case? At any rate let me thank you for it: (1) Inasmuch as it is very useful. (2) It may be regarded as a hint from James that I need not write him any letter longer than a post-card. (3) It is so characteristic of his epistles, brief; though no doubt pithy!

We are all well. Some of us will be writing to James and to you, before the New Year comes in, or to wish you all blessing when it does arrive.■

Meanwhile, dear Mary, believe me, your affectionate father, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: Mrs. Manson (1)

Letters: Mrs. Manson (1) GLASGOW, 17th March 1858. MY DEAR MRS. MANSON,■Thanks for writing me, for in truth I was meditating to write you (i.e. your husband and you=one), but could not make out whereabouts you were at this time. I am glad you are to be near Crieff ; we may see you now and then. But I will be afraid to say much to Mr. Manson about ministerial work, lest thereby I sadden him,■only he is one who can say, 'It is the Lord,' and so be as content to sit still as to labour■

'They also serve who only stand and wait.'

Indeed this is by far the most self-denying work, and so may be found the most glorifying to God. I cannot but hope, too, that the Master has some work for Mr. Manson. Tell him that Wycliffe, when forbidden by the bishop to preach for a season, set the more eagerly to his translation, and remind him that Southwood may become a Wartburg, and he a Luther! As for yourself, no doubt your change of life, the very removal of former cares, and the kind of vacation-state you are in, will cause your soul at times to feel as if under a cloudy sky. But you well know to judge of God's love only by His Unspeakable Gift,■a gift irrevocably given, and given to you,■never by frames and states and feelings and your own thoughts. When Mr. Manson came back to you on the day of the eclipse, did he report that the sun was changed? No, he reported that his light had been intercepted for a few minutes, and that never were men more fully alive to the inexhaustible and unchangeable lustre of that globe of light, than when for a moment deprived of its actual presence. Your husband is somewhat lazy, he has not written me this long time. I think I will make that an excuse for saying no more at present, so good-bye for this time. Pray for us.■Yours truly in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: Mrs. Milne on the death of her father (1)

Letters: Mrs. Milne on the death of her father (1) ON THE DEATH OF HER FATHER.

COLLACE, F. C. Manse, Dec. 13th, 1855. MY DEAR MRS. MILNE,

■I write because it might be some variety to you in your sojourn at Hastings, something like a visit. We felt for you in your bereavement, for a father is altogether peculiar, so peculiar that you know the Lord represents our nearest access to Himself by saying it is our being able to call Him ’Abba, Father;’ ay, to ’cry’ thus to Him, to speak it loudly, firmly, not faintly, not fearfully■to ’cry’ in the ear of angels, ’Jehovah is my Father,’ to ’cry’ in the ear of the Lord Himself, ’Thou art Abba!’

Dear friend, this is left to you, this supplying of an earthly father’s place by more frequent ’crying’ to the Father above. And as you do so, lo! there is one at His right hand who smiles on you and calls you ’Sister!’ It is your Elder Brother, the Lord Jesus; for He says that ’whoever does the will of His Father is to Him "sister."’ And then the silent but most mighty Comforter, the Spirit of grace, He breathes on you while the Father smiles, and while Jesus owns you. What life He breathes, what thoughts, what hopes too! One of the hopes He breathes is ’Come, Lord Jesus,’ the hope of the day of meeting in the presence of the Lord, all the friends that He has removed from time to time. I was much struck to-day by a simple thought, viz. ’our joys are only beginning.’ Yes, the joys we have tasted are mere foretastes. Have you noticed in Ephesians 2:1-22 ’that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us.’ All we get here is but an earnest and no more. And then, as truly as our joys are only beginning, so our sorrows are ending. They will soon be over: our last tear shed, our last sigh heaved, the last wrinkle on our brow smoothed away by the hand that places on our head the Crown of Glory! ’Come, Lord Jesus!’ . . . . Will you sometimes pray for us?■Yours truly in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

Chapter 53

05. Letters: Mrs. Mudie (1)

Letters: Mrs. Mudie (1) GLASGOW, 5th June 1891. MY DEAR MRS. MUDIE,

■I was altogether taken by surprise when the news came, 'Mr. Mudie is gone!' ■gone to the 'mountain of myrrh and hill of frankincense till the Daybreak.' You do not know how many of Christ's friends here and elsewhere will miss him. All of us felt, when we were privileged to have his visits, that we had among us a man of God, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost,■full of brotherly love also in no ordinary degree, and bright in spirit with the hope of soon meeting his Lord. But, dear sister, shall not you and yours lift up your heads and 'rejoice with them that do rejoice ;' rejoice with him who to-day sings before the Throne:

'His presence fills each heart with joy.' And then the Day of our Gathering together in Christ, how near it may be! Samuel Rutherford would have reminded you as he reminded a dying friend: 'Ye will not sleep long in the dust before the Daybreak. It is a far shorter piece of the night to you than to Abraham and Moses.' Nor will the Comforter forget to bring you many a message from our sympathising High Priest who spoke that word at the grave of Lazarus, 'If thou wilt believe, thou shalt see the glory of God' in this bereavement. We will pray for you all, that your consolation may abound.

Meanwhile, believe me your companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Christ, ANDREW A. BONAR.

Chapter 54

05. Letters: Mrs. R. M. Ballantyne, his niece, Harrow-on-the-Hill (1)

Letters: Mrs. R. M. Ballantyne, his niece, Harrow-on-the-Hill (1) GLASGOW, 18th April 1890. MY DEAR JANE, ■I shall try to do as you request.

I have a list of names■sons of godly parents■who are still 'far off,' for whom I pray from time to time that they may be 'brought nigh by the blood of Christ,' led by the Holy Spirit. I shall put ■'s name into the number.

Pray for me and mine. Tell our great High Priest how 'poor and needy' we are, and ask Him to 'think upon us.' With kindest regards to Robert, ■Your affectionate uncle, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: Mrs. Thom, Aberfeldy (2)

Letters: Mrs. Thom, Aberfeldy (2) GLASGOW, March 1st, 1879.

DEAR MRS. THOM,

■I was glad to hear from you. You seem to thrive on Highland air and Highland services. . . . Pray for us here, seek power from on high to minister and people. I read the other day that two American professors have lately shown how the power that is in the Niagara Fall may be transmitted along a copper cable half an inch thick, to the distance of 500 miles. We know how to get greater power than Niagara power from above. Do we think sufficiently on this? For read Paul's prayer, Ephesians 1:1-23.: 'that the eyes of your understanding being enlightened .. . ye may know the exceeding greatness of His power,' etc.

Here is another exercise for you.

Find out eleven ways in which 'justification' is spoken of, e.g. the act of the Father,■then of Christ,■ by grace, etc.

Study Esther and Job in connection. The former is the mystery of providence in public affairs, the latter, in believers personal affairs.

Take each chapter of Proverbs after the ninth, and set yourself to find an instance that illustrates each successive verse, e.g. 'a wise son maketh a glad father;' Solomon himself, etc. In the twelve minor prophets note the special mission or burden of each, e.g. Hosea, the prophet of the backslider; Joel (the earliest book of written prophecies), the announcer of the full gift of the Spirit in the midst of judgments abroad. The cold has been intense here and long continued. Our new church is very comfortable, but my voice is not what it should be, even in the new church. The Holy Spirit seems sometimes to breathe among us very blessedly. . .. Again asking to be remembered■ Believe me always, yours truly in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- GLASGOW, 12th May 1883.

DEAR MRS. THOM,

■There is no second baptism in the Acts of the Apostles. There is a second, and a third, and a fourth, and as many as you like filling with the Holy Ghost. From time to time the Lord is pleased to give more and more out of Christ's fulness. The mistake which some people make about a second baptism is this. They do not notice that the thing promised was a far fuller gift of the Spirit than in Old Testament times, as soon as Christ was ascended to the Father with His completed sacrifice. Whoever acknowledged this completed work of Christ was warranted at once to ask and expect the fuller gift of the Spirit. Until disciples acknowledged this completed work they got only the Old Testament measure of the Spirit. Hence in Acts xix. i-6, the question to the twelve disciples, 'Have you received the promised full gift of the Holy Spirit?' The answer was, 'We know by John's teaching that such a thing is to be, but as yet we have not heard that any of that shower has

fallen.’

Upon this they were instructed in the whole truth about Christ and His finished work, and were baptized (as a sign of this) in the way Christ appointed. And then there followed the gift of the full shower on their souls. Is this satisfactory? Pray for us.■Yours in Him, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: Mrs. William Bonar his sister-in-law (2)

Letters: Mrs. William Bonar his sister-in-law (2) GIRVAN, 16th Aug. 1862. MY DEAR JESSIE,

... It is so still to-day, the sea like glass, and somehow everything seems to fall in suitably with our present feelings. We have bidden dear Christian our last farewell. It is so strange to try to realise that we shall no longer see her among us, or get one of her letters telling whatever she thought would interest us. I feel as if a large reservoir of sympathy were now gone, there were so many little things in which very few are interested at all, that she was sure to care for and to make it her delight to manage. York Place can never be the same again, for the home feeling that was about it lay very much in the heart of sympathy that was there. Many thanks to you, Jessie, for all your unwearied attention and invaluable services. What a remarkable providence that you and William should have been able thus to be present, and take such part in all those last scenes! Dear Christian now knows that 'the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit' was 'in the sight of God of great price.' To-morrow she will be spending a happier Sabbath than we can enjoy here. She will be able to tell us when we next meet her, what undiscovered riches are in Jesus, how glorious He is, how lovely, what a fountain of life! . . . Christian was ten years with me in Collace, and I am certain she never once all that time spoke to me one unkind word or did one selfish act. I wish that in this my life were like hers. So to live in such a world needs great grace. But the day approaches when we 'shall see Him,' and be made 'like Him.' . . .■Your affectionate brother, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- GLASGOW, 28th Oct. 1864. MY DEAR JESSIE,

■You will excuse me writing at any length, and yet I wish to send a few lines to thank you and William. No doubt you have prayed for me and mine, as well as thought on us and sympathised. For some days I was like one half-dreaming, now all is sadly real. Who can tell the strange want in my home, and the cloud that at times casts its dark shadow over me when something brings up my loss and forces me to remember that the sixteen years of our happy, happy home life are over ! I know 'it is the Lord,' and I know that 'I shall yet praise Him.'

I preached on Sabbath on Psalms 97:11, trying to show the Lord's way of bringing light and gladness out of darkness and sorrow, first in the atoning work of the Head of the Church; second, in the sanctifying work He carries on in His members. It is such times as these that make a minister feel that he must handle solid truth, preaching to himself all the while. . . . My meditation at my prayer-meeting was on Deuteronomy 1:6-8, and then Deuteronomy 1:19-26. God is saying to me 'You have dwelt at this mountain long enough,' and then He is also saying, 'Arise, journey onwards to the Promised Kingdom.' Driven out of a rest here that was ready to ensnare the soul and make it self-indulgent, He cries, 'Be done with this for ever, and go on to a better.' And I was struck with noticing that He makes so little account of the wilderness that lies between. He puts the rest out of which He shakes us, side by side with the rest of the Kingdom. Who can tell how soon that Kingdom may be reached!

Give William my kindest love.

■Your affectionate brother, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: Rev. A.N.Somerville Glasgow (8)

Letters: Rev. A.N.Somerville Glasgow (8) Monday, Dec. 11th, 1837. MY DEAR ALIC,

■you now know the beginning of a full ministry in the Gospel of Christ. Has it, then, solemnised you deeply? Have you felt as the young priest■ some young son of Aaron■would feel on the day when first the anointing oil that ordained him to his office was poured on his head, and himself permitted for the first time to go in at the door of the Holy Place, and walk by the side of the Golden Candlestick and touch the shew-bread and tread the floor of the place where God was peculiarly present? Anything like this in you? Or anything like Christ's spirit after His heavenly baptism? Perhaps, rather, you have been like Christ after His baptism in regard to temptation. Has Satan already assailed you? Has he three times tempted you? Has he puffed you up with a high idea of self or made you doubt the love of God your Father, or asked you to court the honour of the world? I cannot conjecture your state of soul■but I trust that at least it is ever 'looking unto Jesus' and 'into Jesus.'

All went well at Kelso. I felt as if God melted my soul to perfect softness, when I saw the hands of the Presbytery laid on the head of my brother [Horatius]. The feeling was that of joy and praise at the honour, and a sort of awe. . . . You will be saying ■What! this long, long letter, and not a word about the Jews! Well then, dear Alic, I must tell you what I seriously consider to be another answer of prayer. . . Last week a foreign Jew, who has been long in Britain, found his way from Dublin through Glasgow (N.B.■He did not stay in a city where the lately ordained minister was for taking to himself and his fellows all the glorious things written by the prophets regarding 'Zion' and 'Jerusalem') till he reached Edinburgh. . . He is very poor, speaks almost nothing but German, is very simple, and has almost come to believe in Christ. He is very interesting. Last Sabbath I had the satisfaction of preaching in Rose Street (Part of his mission-district in connection with St. George's Church, Edinburgh) to him and another Jew on Revelation 14:1. Now, Alic, is there not something from God in all this? Is it not Christ saying to me that I am right in peculiarly loving Israel? My meeting in Rose Street last night was very full, and there were about thirty men . . . two careless Roman Catholics among them. So that you see I am a happy man, honoured of God to preach to some followers of Antichrist, and to some of His ancient people. Indeed I have been very happy of late in my soul. Remember to observe our concerted times of prayer, and count it absolutely necessary to be often alone, like Jacob at Jabbok, until you can call your study 'Peniel; for I have seen God face to face'. Pray for wisdom for me, that I may speak to sinners and to saints in season. . . . Yours truly, dear Alic, in the flesh and in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- COLLACE, Wednesday, Jan.19th, 1842. MY DEAR ALIC,

■ A friend loveth at all times ; but I find that hours of peril make us know our love to one another more than other times. We were alarmed by hearing of your sickness, and I write to get some account of you. Have you been in 'the valley of the shadow of death' ? Was it dark? Did the 'staff ' support you? Could you sing in its gloom, 'I am persuaded that neither death nor life,' etc.? I hear

you are better now, you are to be spared a little longer for our sakes and your own. Robert M' Cheyne is staying with me at present, and we joined heartily in prayer for you on Saturday evening especially. Write us and say what are the 'peaceable fruits of righteousness' that 'afterwards' appear. What views of your Master did you obtain? what views of your own heart? Are you more weary than ever of your own righteous ness■of self, which is truly a Hydra■of your fellow-men and corruption? Are you not 'looking for and hasting unto the coming of the Day of God' ? You and I shall then stand in our Redeemer's beauty, . . . and all our brethren alike beautiful■all fair■no spot■ without blemish■without wrinkle■white and clean■ in fine linen■in garments of needlework■like Jesus. Will you know me in that day? Will you know yourself?

Remember me to Mrs. Somerville, though we be strangers in the flesh. Bid her remember 'the elect lady.' ■Believe me, dear Alic, yonrs truly in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- COLLACE, Sept. 23, 1844. MY DEAR A.,

■Your letter teased me■for it is not in my power to come to your Communion. I am engaged to Edinburgh■all the diets. David Brown had previously written me to come to him, and I thought, 'Now if I could have done this, I might at least be with A. S. at a Communion!' But it is ordered otherwise. We have got different spots of the vineyard to labour in, and the Husbandman who hired us knows best how to use us. Was it to keep us from being ambitious like the disciples, that He said of the labourers: 'They received every man a penny?' We are apt to seek to be great in the kingdom of heaven. I find it often difficult to be content to be 'the last of all and servant of all,' to stand ever on the low step of free grace, without one quality or personal property to make a difference between me and the brand plucked from the burning at the last hour. We must exalt Christ so high as to get out of sight of ourselves in looking up to Him. We must be like the company in Revelation 4:1-11, so occupied in setting Him on high as to forget altogether that we have any separate existence from Him. The Lord make your vestry to be to you 'The secret place of the Most High.' I have been laid up in the house for a fortnight by a sprained foot, which I got in falling from my horse when it started at something on the road. I find this trial useful. 'All the paths of the Lord' are 'mercy' as well as 'truth.'

Go on, brother, through the valley of Baca. Zion will soon be in view! 'Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me.' ■Believe me, dear A., yours in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- COLLACE, Sept. 18th, 1846. MY DEAR A., ■Here is a fragment supposed to have been transmitted by the 'Anticipative telegraph.'

St. Vincent Street, Glasgow Breakfast-table spread. Mrs. Somerville waiting for Mr. S., who enters at last, still rather dull.

Mr. S. 'Any letters this morning? I have been thinking of my Communion arrangements.'

Mrs. S. 'There is one there marked "Perth." Perhaps it may be from some friend whom you asked to come to your Communion.'

Mr. S. 'Oh, I know the handwriting. It is from Collace no doubt.' (Reads very gravely.) Mrs. S. 'Well, is it a promise of help?'

Mr. S. 'O no, no■as provoking as ever. That man will never look near us. Well, well, good Mr. Cumming will do more than supply his place.'

(Caetera desunt.) The truth is, dear Alic, I am engaged already to the Edinburgh Fast Day and Sabbath, but if you will feel it at all of use I shall at once do this. I could come on Monday morning, I believe, by the train in time to preach forenoon and evening . . . . I have just returned from ten days' preaching in the Mearns, round about Montrose. . . . I preached about fourteen times during these ten days; one of the times was a morning lecture on the Jews and the Second Advent. However, with the exception of this last, and, of course, occasional statements of the coming Day of God, the ten days were spent in evangelising. 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' I saw in two places a good deal of impression...

Finally, dear brother, I do not always feed among the lilies. I know my Shepherd always feeds there and that He feeds me, but He often gives me 'bitter herbs' for food. Sin and sinners■God dishonoured by us and by others■will never be otherwise than bitter herbs. But let us eat the Paschal Lamb all the more. . . . Believe me, dear A., yours in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- COLLACE, Nov. 23rd, 1846. MY DEAR ALIC,■I have nothing worth to send you about Paul. You have no doubt anticipated almost all I could offer from a somewhat hasty glance. In my usual reading I have come to 1 Corinthians, and there have been led to notice one interesting feature in Paul. Though the greatest and wisest■best stored of all■he never seems to like to stand alone. It is always Paul and Timothy■Paul and Barnabas■Paul and Apollos ■Paul and Titus■Paul and Sosthenes, etc. Now this is not from want of firmness, needing the sympathy of others to decide him, but from deep wisdom. He sees that this is God's way of keeping the workers humble. He does not employ one only at a building, but several, and so no one can say 'the success is owing to me.' It may be your fellow-labourer that is the secret of the blessing■perhaps he is more prayerful than you, more single-minded. Hence, says Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:1-23, 'He that planteth and he that watereth are one,' that is, it is one and the same work, and has the same wages. None is to say, 'Planting is far more important and difficult than watering.' These departments of labour form but one work in God's view, and each labourer is alike rewarded for success. We are God's sunergoi, i.e. we are set by God to be one another's fellow-labourers. It is not 'we are labourers along with God.' No, but we belong to the corps of labourers who build God's temple and get our penny at night. Thus we are kept from despising one another. Hence, blessing comes down best when not the minister only, but elders, teachers, visitors, are all alike active and full of prayer and faith. No room here to say, 'It is I that bring down the shower.' Our Lord meant this also in John 4:1-54: 'He that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.' There is somewhat of the same principle in 'two or three agreeing together.' This is a hasty note, but, among other ends, it will show that I retain a lively remembrance of the happy evening I spent with you in Glasgow. Peace be to your house, and mercy and peace to you its head, responsible for so many souls.■Yours truly, dear brother, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- COLLACE, Oct. 1st, 1847. MY DEAR A.,■Did you ever read this extract from a sermon recently delivered, or supposed to be recently delivered, to a congregation in Glasgow? 'Paul, my friends, was a pattern of kindness to his brethren. If he touched at Tyre away he went to see his brethren there. But more than this; Paul

was most generous in his kindness; he spent not only one, but seven days with these disciples. Alas, it is not so in our cold days! My brethren pass through the very town where they know a brother dwells, and go not up to salute him. I can speak from experience '. . . . (Caetera desunt.) (Course of sermons on Paul's life and ministry.)

Note by a reader.■ 'We submit that Paul is rather too highly applauded here. It was because the ship was to remain seven days at Tyre that Paul stayed so long. Indeed, how else could a minister have seven days to spare! And besides, at Ephesus, Acts 20:16, "he determined to sail by Ephesus (parapleusai)," and to invite his brethren in the ministry to meet him elsewhere. Just as if the Pastor■the evangelistic, as well as evangelical Pastor■of Anderston were to be at the Bridge of Earn, and on his way to Glasgow to pass through Perth. He is near Collace, but he determines to "sail by,"■ "for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the Day of Pentecost."' Such things have occurred in other times. 'From Glasgow he writes to Collace and invites the elder of that church.' My well-beloved brother, I am real sorry that there are five, instead of four, Sabbaths in October this year, and you see the reason of my sorrow. Edinburgh Communion is on the 31st and so I cannot get to you on Saturday.. .. In going to Ireland I had arranged to see you in Glasgow, but found out that you and your family were alike out of town. And in returning I .... had to pass on that same day to Edinburgh on account of some necessary arrangements. It was not my forgetfulness of you . . .

Perhaps now you will come in to Edinburgh Communion and we may meet there; at Miletus, if not at Ephesus. . . ■Yours affectionately, dear A., ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- COLLACE, June 30th, 1848 MY DEAR ALIC,■My Communion has filled up my time and made me delay writing to you. You have had a Patmos-time instead of the Upper Room, but both have their place and use, and you are dealt with as a son. Do not be like the Baptist in prison who began to grow impatient and to wonder at his Master's letting him lie in fetters, unused. 'Surely my voice could have still made the Desert ring with the cry," Prepare ye the way of the Lord!"' Surely my time for preaching was very brief. Surely it would be better doing something among crowds of souls than to be here! One of his disciples ventures to soothe him by suggesting, 'Perhaps the Master has not heard of this violent act of Herod's.' 'No, no,' says John,' that will not explain it■He knows well. But I cannot understand His delay.' Another disciple suggests, 'Did not you say that He must increase and you decrease?' '0 yes, but I might still have been allowed to be His herald and proclaim Him to others.' The result is that he sends off two disciples with a message scarcely respectful enough, 'Art Thou indeed the Coming One?' After a few days the two return. 'Well, what did He say?' 'He said," Blessed is he, who soever is not offended in Me."' While they still talk over all that Jesus had done and said, lo! one of Christ's twelve, or one of the seventy, arrives, and tells him the Master had spoken most kindly, lovingly, applaudingly of His suffering servant. And so John reposes on his hard cold prison floor, thinking on his Master's love to him, though he cannot see through His ways. That very night perhaps, when a calm had succeeded to the storm, he is sent for to Paradise, and is not at all offended at being carried thither by the sword of Herod, rather than by a fiery chariot.

What an episode! But, dear A., do take care of yourself. Samuel Miller told me of you pretty fully a few days ago. May your new abode not be so 'haunted' as Newton said his old study at Olney

was, viz., by legions of evil thoughts. I hope to begin my Berwickshire itinerating the last week of July, or first of August.

Thanks for your few hints. The remembrance of Daniel Cormick will, I trust, quicken me to work while it is called to-day, but more and more I see how wretchedly indolent and self-pleasing my soul is in the Lord's work. .. . Believe me, my dear A., yours affectionately, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- TO REV. DR. A. N. SOMERVILLE, ON HIS RETURN HOME FROM SOUTH AFRICA CRAIGNURE, ISLE OF MULL, 6th August 1883. MY DEAR 'ALIC,' friend and brother, ■We are all glad that you are safe home. Old Virgil would perhaps have sung of you as a man like AEneas: - 'Multum ille et terris jactatus et alto.' wondering what could have impelled 'Insignem pietate virum tot adire labores, ' and might have thought of adding an 'Alexandrian' to his 'AEneid,' as Homer appended an 'Odyssey' to his 'Iliad.' But speaking unromantically, and as members of the family of God, we do give thanks for you. We followed your wanderings with great interest, and often asked for you the 'covering' of the Pillar-Cloud, as well as its 'leading'. . . . No doubt you met with old hearers and members, and were gladdened in finding them standing fast in the Lord. Now and then we got notices of your work, and sometimes the subjects you took in preaching Christ and His glorious gospel. You will find a few changes among us since you left. . .

I am here with my family for holidays. A little quiet rest is delightful, and yet work among souls is still better. The other day I was glad to find Romaine saying of his busy days in London, 'I have been preaching Christ's salvation many years in the midst of a crowd, living all the time in a great hurry, and yet I can say I gain every year some fresh knowledge of myself and of my Incarnate God■and find it good indeed to be a poor preacher of His grace.' With kindest congratulations to Mrs. Somerville, I am as of old time,■ Your affectionate friend, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: Rev. Andrew Inglis, Dundee (2)

Letters: Rev. Andrew Inglis, Dundee (2) GLASGOW, 9th July 1891. MY DEAR MR. INGLIS,■I have just been at Greenock, hearing the particulars of my brother John's last hours. He died really like one falling asleep 'in a good old age.' But you, dear brother, are mourning over a beloved daughter called away in her prime, and in the midst of her usefulness. 'His ways are in the sea, and His paths in the great waters.' We have tried to remember you and Mrs. Inglis, and I am sure the Lord Jesus has as much sympathy for you both as He had for Martha and Mary, and is saying to you as truly as to them, 'If you will believe (that is, "if you will only trust My word for it ") you shall see the glory of God in this sore trial.' Resurrection is coming soon, and He who is the Resurrection is coming, and 'will tell us all things.' With true sympathy with all your house and bereaved ones.■Yours in tribulation, as well as in the faith of the Gospel, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- ON THE DEATH OF MRS. INGLIS GLASGOW, 16th Dec. 1891 MY DEAR MR. INGLIS,

■ 'He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men '■how much more unwilling He must be to afflict His own children. He must be purposing some special blessing to you by this stroke. Meanwhile, look within the veil (Revelation 7:1-17) and 'rejoice with them that do rejoice,' while at the same time you look forward and sing:

'The time draws near when from the clouds Christ shall with shouts descend.

. . . . . .

'A few short years of evil past, We reach the happy shore Where death-divided friends at last Shall meet, to part no more.'

You will find that you are prayed for by very many at this time, and all these prayers cannot fail to bring you and yours what otherwise you could not have gained.■

Yours, my dear brother, in true sympathy, for I 'know the heart of a stranger, seeing I have been a stranger in the land of Egypt,'

ANDREW A. BONAR.

Chapter 59

05. Letters: Rev. D.M.M'Intyre, College Park, on his acceptance of the call to Finnieston (1)

Letters: Rev. D.M.M’Intyre, College Park, on his acceptance of the call to Finnieston (1) GLASGOW, 24th June 1891. MY DEAR MR. M’INTYRE,

■I am very very thankful for your decision, and not I only, but very many here. If you knew all, I think you would recognise the Lord’s answer to continued prayer in the whole matter.

I have passed through the pain of bidding farewell to an attached and prayerful flock, but it may be a step higher in sanctification. I heard also in my own case of three distinct cases of blessing to unsaved ones that were brought out clearly after I had left them. The Lord Himself was the Shepherd who gathered in the wanderers, when their under-shepherd was away, and I am not sure but that the presence of the under-shepherd might have been a hindrance.

Let us go on praying for each other, dear brother and fellow-soldier, and believe me, yours truly in Him who sends no one on warfare at his own charges,

ANDREW A. BONAR

05. Letters: Rev. Dr. Andrew, Glasgow (1)

Letters: Rev. Dr. Andrew, Glasgow (1) 20 INDIA STREET, GLASGOW, 23rd January 1892 MY DEAR FELLOW-PILGRIM,

■Very many thanks for your Visit to Palestine. It is a capital book for the young, and reading your narrative is just like taking a walk with you and hearing you all the time calling our attention to sights and scenes... . We must have a talk about all these things. I am not at all pleased at your expressing doubt as to 'Lazarus' Tomb!' I went down into it, and thought it so grand to stand on Resurrection ground. And now you are robbing me of that delight. 'Thy Land, O Immanuel !' No wonder we feel it to be sacred. Again sending you my warmest thanks, believe me, your brother and companion in tribulation; and in the kingdom and patience of Christ, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: Rev. Dr. Bannerman, Perth (1)

Letters: Rev. Dr. Bannerman, Perth (1) GLASGOW, 6th Dec. 1892. MY DEAR DR. BANNERMAN,■I return the old letter.(An old letter, which Dr. Bannernman has sent him to read, describing the Deputation appointed to visit the Holy Land in 1839.) It has, you may believe, a peculiar interest to me, and the writer's estimate of the 'wisdom' of the Deputies to the Holy Land is not far from the truth. There was very little of the 'wisdom of the serpent' among us■ very little indeed; but I believe we were on that very account made more prayerful, and it was prayer that filled our sails and brought us into the haven.

Thanks for your programme of evening services. I know Mason's Songs of Praise and Penitential Cries. All his pieces have in them the fragrance of the Rose of Sharon. Kindest regards to Mrs. Bannerman and to Miss Omond, who may 'rejoice with them that do rejoice' ■her father's joy ! (alluding to the death of the Rev, Dr. Omond, Monzie)■Yours truly, dear brother, ANDREW A. BONAR.

Chapter 62

05. Letters: Rev. Dr. John J. Bonar his brother, Greenock (1)

Letters: Rev. Dr. John J. Bonar his brother, Greenock (1) GLASGOW, 28th Oct. 1864. MY DEAR JOHN,

■I cannot tell how helpful you have been to me during this season. No one could have given more sympathy, no one could have done more to cheer than you have done. I look upon it all as an intimation sent from the Elder Brother, through you, of the sympathy of His heart, for He must have put it into yours. You will surely share in the blessing which I believe this bitter trial has been sent to usher in. But still it is sore. On Wednesday I took up Deuteronomy 1:19-26 and was led to notice that, while at Deuteronomy 1:6-7, the Lord took no notice of the intervening wilderness between Horeb and Canaan, Moses speaks of it, and speaks of it as 'a great and terrible wilderness.' This is our estimate of things, we feel them to the quick. But God's estimate is different, for He sees the results and He sees the comparative littleness of all this, exactly as Paul is led to say, 'our light affliction,' and also, 'but for a moment.' Oh, if we saw the kingdom close at hand in all its glorious wealth of all things, we too would ever say 'light affliction,' that is the forerunner of such a 'weight of glory.' And, if we could look at time also in God's way, a few years would seem but for a moment. . . .■Your affectionate brother, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: Rev. Dr. MacDonald, North Leith (3)

Letters: Rev. Dr. MacDonald, North Leith (3) GLASGOW, 9th December 1878. MY DEAR ROBERT,

■From Day to Day is a book of most pleasant and profitable reading. It is 365 meditations■as many as Samuel Rutherford's Letters■as many as Enoch's years of earthly pilgrimage and walking with God. There is a clearness and pointedness in your style of writing that at once attracts the reader, and, dipping his rod in the honey, he finds his eyes enlightened. Had I attempted such a book my aim would have been to forge a chain of 365 links■every day a doctrine that naturally followed the one before! But I fear my idea is Utopian.

Many thanks■and may you get thanks of the best kind in the prayers of those who are receivers of blessing by your pages.■Your brother in the faith and patience of the Lord Jesus, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- GLASGOW, 16th May 1882.

MODERATOR,

■I understand that to-morrow is your birthday. Well, in turning over some papers, I lighted on a few scraps of Robert M'Cheyne's, and one is entitled a 'Birthday Ode' to his father. I venture, my dear Moderator-Elect, to apply to you the two lines with which the fragment concludes :■

'We pray that, as oft as thy birthday appears, Thy purified joys may increase with thy years.'

I hope to see and hear you on Thursday, if the Lord will. (The opening of the Free Church Assembly, of which Dr. Macdonald was that year to be Moderator.) Take this text, brother, 'Only be strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law. Turn not from it to the right hand nor to the left, for then thou shalt prosper and have good success.' ■ Your fellow-soldier, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- GLASGOW, 18th Jany. 1886. MY DEAR 'ROBERT MACDONALD,'

■Only think how old you and I must be! (1) You were ordained in Blairgowrie before I was a minister at Collace, and I was there eighteen years, and have been in this city twenty-nine years. (2) This being so, it must be forty-seven years at least since you and I began to interchange ministerial services! How old we are now! Well, remember the Eastern saying,'■The palm-tree bears the finest dates when it is a hundred years old,' and as you are on the way to that goal (though not quite in sight of it yet), we here in Glasgow, who are expecting you in the end of the week, are, of course, warranted to look for the 'finest dates' that were ever shaken from the Blairgowrie-and-North Leith Palm-tree. . .

Paul wrote to Philemon (verse 22nd): 'Prepare me a lodging.' Let me anticipate any such request by saying your prophet's chamber shall be ready for you (with a good fire in this cold, cold

weather) whenever you come on Saturday. . . . ■Ever yours, dear brother, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: Rev. Duncan Stewart, Hawick (1)

Letters: Rev. Duncan Stewart, Hawick (1) GLASGOW, I3th Feb. 1886. MY DEAR MR. STEWART,

■Your 'Lectures' (On the Covenanters, which Mr. Stewart had been delivering in Hawick.) have reached me this week and last■both of them very fresh and most interesting. It has been to you a labour of love, and of 'brotherly love;' for these true witnesses for Christ's Crown and Covenant, though sleeping in the dust for a time, still live, and are ready to meet us who love their Lord on the Day of His appearing. They will be among those who were 'beheaded for the witness of Jesus,' and we who sympathise with them shall be among 'those who did not worship the Beast nor receive his mark,' either on forehead or hand. We shall reign together! . . .■Yours truly, dear brother, ANDREW A. BONAR.

Chapter 65

05. Letters: Rev. Horatius Bonar his brother (2)

Letters: Rev. Horatius Bonar his brother (2) DURNESS, SUTHERLANDSHIRE, 11th August 1869. MY DEAR HORACE,

■I am often thinking on you and Jane, and the past ways of our God. 'Even so, Father.' May we not apply Christ's words■ 'Thou takest away the gift which we would have kept, and givest other gifts. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.' Last night you were brought up to my thoughts by hearing a lady, at the house where we have spent an evening, telling of sinking very much as we saw Kitty sink. (H.Bonar's second daughter, Christian, who died of consumption on the 17th of July 1869). Many such things are with Him; but the mists shall one day rise (as so often we see in the scenery here) and reveal the whole plan in its grace and wisdom. Our journeyings (Dr. Bonar was one of a deputation from the Free Church Assembly to the congregations in Sutherlandshire) have been interesting in many ways. The scenery is all new and peculiar■rocks, lochs, and streams everywhere, as well as high mountains. . .

Last night . . . we came on to this place. It is just twelve miles from Cape Wrath. Our meetings hitherto have all been at mid-day. There are capital congregations of people, but the life is very low in both ministers and people. . . .

I have not read a newspaper for ten days.

■Your affectionate brother, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- GLASGOW, Decr. 31, 1884. MY DEAR HORACE,

■Last night your parcel came. All felt that it was very kind of you to remember us amidst your trials, (Mrs. Horatius Bonar died on the 3rd of December 1884) and when we began family worship, the passage in course was (2 Corinthians 1:4): 'Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble.' I thought of you as the latest instance of the kind; and then I looked a little way back and saw each of us four brothers, drinking, each of us in turn, the same cup of sorrow, and made to drink at the same time of the same cup of blessing, so as to be able to say, 'Our consolation aboundeth by Christ.'

I suppose Caroline is somewhat better. We have not heard for a few days. Remember me to her if you are seeing her, and tell her she is not to faint, 'If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small'■ thou art not leaning on Almighty strength.

Give my kindest love to Mary and Lily and Emily, and all the young people; and to Horace Ninian, who must be ready to go with his King to any Flodden Field. (An ancestor, Sir Ninian Bonar, is said to have been one of those who fell on Flodden Field.) ■Your affectionate brother, ANDREW A. BONAR.

Chapter 66

05. Letters: Rev. J.H.Thomson, Hightae (1)

Letters: Rev. J.H.Thomson, Hightae (1) CRAIGNURE, ISLE OF MULL, Augst. 16th, 1884.

MAN OF ZEBULON, who 'handlest the pen of the writer,' and follower of Ezra and his band, who not only read in the law of God distinctly, but who also 'gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading,' peace be with you.

I suppose you are illustrating to yourself the wisdom as well as kindliness of the precept: 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.' Aren't you getting mouthfuls of such food as gives you strength to go on with your labour■many a refreshing thought, many a view of the King's treasures?

I have written to-day (being still in the country and somewhat at leisure) the enclosed pages, to form a brief 'Preface' to Samuel Rutherford's Sermons. Will you kindly read it over, and tell me if it meets your approbation ?

■Yours truly, dear brother, ANDREW A. BONAR, philo-Rhaetorfortis.

05. Letters: Rev. J.H.Wilson Edinburgh (3)

Letters: Rev. J.H.Wilson Edinburgh (3) GLASGOW, 14th Jan. 1863. MY DEAR MR. WILSON, ■I have been hearing tidings of your state of health that are not very pleasant. Will you, if convenient, drop me a few lines letting me know? For you know Paul, had he been in our day, would have sent Tychicus 'to let us know' his affairs and how he was 'doing.' I have often been led to muse on the number of sick labourers mentioned in the Epistles, ■ Epaphroditus, Timothy, Trophimus, Gaius, ■all of them unhealed, though companions of men who healed others, and though able probably themselves to work miracles. There must be much blessing conveyed in this way not only to the afflicted one himself, but to his flock. What sermons will they thus be made to hear! 'Cease ye from man.' 'God liveth.' 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' Be of good cheer, brother, the Master has laid His own hand on you. He has done it too at the best time, no doubt. O for grace to live for such a Master and for none else! When you get access and are remembering your friends, will you think on me and ask some gift? If you are to get a time of honour by being sent up the hill as one of the 'Aaron and Hur' company, think of some of us who pray little, and with little faith.■Yours truly in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- (EXTRACT FROM LETTER TO REV. DR. J. H. WILSON ON THE DEATH OF HIS AUNT)

Janry. 1882.

. . . . You will be saying 'The post has come from the Celestial City,' and the contents of the letter are just such as Christiana found in hers. 'Hail! good woman, I bring thee tidings that the Master calls for thee to stand in His presence in clothes of immortality!' And do you remember that while part of the household wept, Mr. Greatheart and Mr. Valiant-for-Truth played upon the well-tuned cymbal and harp for joy that she had gone to be with the King? In process of time (if the Lord delay His coming to us) the post will sound his horn at our chamber door, saying, 'I am come to tell thee that thy Master hath need of thee, and that, in a very little time, thou must behold His face in brightness!'

Meanwhile, let us 'occupy.' ■With kindest regards and sympathy, believe me, yours truly in Him who doeth all things well, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- GLASGOW, 14th Febry. 1891. MY DEAR DR. WILSON,

■I thought you might perhaps give an old minister who needs a colleague rest from extra work! But I cannot refuse to be with you; it is always a pleasant time, for 'iron sharpeneth iron.' And then I make reprisals on you, as in time past. . . Is not the 'joy in heaven' communicated by the Shepherd to the 'friends and neighbours '■that is, Christ the Shepherd is rejoicing, and invites angels and redeemed ones to share with Him. When you are addressing the students and professors at Aberdeen do you not think the subject of personal visitation should be pressed on them? How much professors could do if they had the heart for face-to-face dealing with the

students, and what a lesson it would be to their students for after-years! I am persuaded that if our young ministers gave themselves more really to this kind of work■dealing with the individuals of their people in visitation, and doing this from year to year, it would have two results: (1) It would cure some of them of their vague intellectual preaching, and bring them back to the simple gospel; (2) It would go far to keep up the liveliness of spiritual life in their elders and Christian people. But this is Saturday! so good-bye. - Peace be with with you and yours, dear brother, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: Rev. James Manson (4)

Letters: Rev. James Manson (4) COLLACE, August 30, 1844. MY DEAR FRIEND,

■I am longing to hear of you. Are you better? and where are you? It is a sore trial to be laid aside, but it must be very sanctifying. It seems to be peculiarly a minister's furnace. Remember the Baptist. He preached in full health amid the breezes of the hills of Judea, and then at the waters of AEnon ; and as he preached he cried, 'He must increase, but I must decrease!' Well, he was soon laid up in the dungeon of Machaerus, and saw Herod's gay company riding out and in to the palace■while he could only mourn, 'Lord! art Thou He that should come?' Your own history resembles this■you ministered in the hilly country, and then by the waters of AEnon; and now you are learning John's lesson of trial. But perhaps you have more work yet■prepare for it by the deepening holiness of your soul. Tell me what you are learning in his school . . . . . .

Write me if you can, and believe me, dear brother, yours in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- KELSO, April 30th, 1846. MY DEAR BROTHER,■I was appointed to furnish you with the annexed list of brethren in which is your own name, understanding that you were willing to join us in keeping one day every month as peculiarly set apart for fasting and prayer. Monday next is the day we mean to begin and the first Monday of every month thereafter. Your turn to give notice will not be for a year yet. Surely we need much to pray■and to sigh and cry for the land. How little fulness in our messages! How little of the love that is as a most vehement flame! How seldom we feel commissioned by God at the time! How rare the felt and evident presence of the Holy Ghost! Few are saved■our hearers float down the stream to the lake of fire, and we sit on the banks writing sermons and speaking words, instead of really rushing to their rescue, declaring the whole mind of God opened out at Calvary. O brother, let us go and put ourselves on Monday under the Holy Spirit's teaching anew■to be taught the Word■and how to preach the contents of the Word, not our thoughts upon it. One spark of lightning is worth a thousand of tame candle-flames■so, one sentence given us by the Holy Ghost is worth volumes of any other.

Join us, then, on Monday. May He Himself give us His power to wrestle.■Yours truly in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- GLASGOW, 16th Dec. 1864. MY DEAR FRIEND,

■I should have replied at once to your very kind letter, but often just now there seems a strange indolence to creep over me, disinclining me for exertion and suggesting postponement for a time. . . . . My hands are full of work, which is good for me, for at home the blank does at times appear indescribably sad. But the Lord is not far off. He does at times pour over me the 'oil of gladness' from His own person and presence. . . . I hope your throat is really better. You must be moderate in your work though not in your creed. I am quite set on a visit to that private chapel of yours. (Mr. Manson had fitted up his green-house in Crossford as a meeting-place, and services were held in

it till a church was built in 1873) May it be in a high sense 'the Porter's Lodge,' the Lodge of Him to whom 'the Porter openeth,' ■and may the Divine Porter who welcomed the returning Shepherd that laid down His life for the sheep be ever there, ready to welcome returning sheep.

We are all well. 'He stayeth His rough wind in the day of His east wind.' ■Yours truly in the Lord Jesus, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- GLASGOW, 23rd Sept. 1889. MY DEAR VENERABLE FRIEND,

■I have just come from the funeral of Dr. Somerville, our old and true-hearted friend. He was laid in the grave at the Western Necropolis, a little beyond Maryhill. Have you many memories of him? He was greatly blessed in his ministry, and for fifty-two years went on preaching the 'blood and the obedience of Christ' without once turning aside. It is difficult to believe that he is gone from among us. But we shall all soon meet together, for the 'coming of the Lord draweth nigh.'

I have Major Whittle in my church this week holding meetings. He is a most Scriptural and effective evangelist. Do you know that, on Sabbath last, I began the fifty-first year of my ministry! Were you with me on my Ordination-day, or Where were you? Dr. Candlish introduced me. O how many sins of commission and omission! I feel often ashamed when I read over my sermons of early date■so little in them ■and so very little to remember in regard to their being useful. Do you ever groan at such retrospects? I do rejoice that it is written, 'Your sins and your iniquities I will remember no more!'

Pray for us and for our evangelistic meetings this week.■Yours affectionately, in much weakness, infirmity, stupidity, ANDREW A. BONAR.

P.S.■Your grapes were excellent. I wonder if Eshcol-clusters were better? Scarcely!

05. Letters: Rev. John Milne, Perth (13)

Letters: Rev. John Milne, Perth (13) KELSO, April 28th, 1846. MY DEAR BROTHER,

■Do not forget Monday next. (Day of prayer and fasting) In spite of Satan and the flesh keep it from morning to evening. In spite of the temptation, ■O this must be done, or 'that sick person must be seen,' or 'that caller on business must be listened to for a moment, only a moment !' ■in spite of all, keep the day.

Ask the Holy Ghost to teach us afresh■to teach us the Bible, and how to preach its contents and not our thoughts. O what need of prayer! The land lies dead. Jesus is little loved even by His own. Who are the mighty men that will break through the host of the Philistines to bring Him one cup of water? O brother, let us lie low. Let us seek the 'mourning as for an only son.'

I have to-day to write sixteen letters, and then to go to Jedburgh, so I must close. Remember me who am on this occasion your remembrancer.■Yours truly in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- COLLACE, Friday Evening. MY DEAR BROTHER,

■... I was trying to stand beside Paul last Sabbath and hear him cry, 'O wretched man,' etc. His abhorrence of his remainder of sin arose from his unclouded assurance that his God so loved him ■and how intense was his abhorrence! What a cry at the sight of remaining selfishness■at the discovery that he, a pardoned soul, should still be self-willed, slow to believe. God is heaping on me His favour and making me bask in His sweetest beams and yet I am self-pleasing, self-seeking, etc., 'O wretched man!' Never despond, dear brother, and never tell your people that you despond, so long as He who gave your commission the bideth the same. O blessed certainty! my God loves me with all His heart, and has sent me to show others way to the same bliss. And, blessed hope, 'it doth not yet appear what we shall be,' etc.■Yours in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- COLLACE, Augst. 16th, 1852. MY DEAR BROTHER,

■I trust your little boy is to be spared, and that the Lord is only teaching you that he is a gift in the hands of the Preserver of men. 'He careth for you' must be in your thoughts continually under your long-continued anxieties. 'He careth for you!' and these repeated threatenings of separation are proofs of His care. 'He careth for you,' and so He will not let you alone without uncertainty being in your cup of comfort, since that ingredient is needful to its efficacy. But 'He careth for you,' brother, in every way, and so for your little boy as part of you, and as acknowledged such in the hour of his baptism. . . .

How ingenious is Satan in devising schemes for withdrawing us from prayer, and from steadily setting forth Christ the Lord as the life of our every duty, and every sermon. Pray for me, brother, that I may daily, at least, touch the hem of His garment, for, 'as many as touched Him were made

whole.’ ■Yours truly in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR. When will you keep yourself disengaged to have time to pray with us? . . . Can you afford to want (do without) united prayer?

---------- COLLACE, F. C. Manse [1852]. MY DEAR BROTHER,

■Our post passes only once a day, and I have thoughtlessly let the time slip on, so that I fear this may not reach you before Sabbath. I have been enabled to pray for you more than once with some freedom since I heard of your stroke, which is perhaps the best of all ways of offering you help and bringing you comfort. It may draw forth for you the sympathy of the Lord Jesus. Twice to-day has this verse met me in opening the Word for personal reading, ’He hath done all things well.’ Nothing has happened to you accidentally. He has done it all, as truly as we can say of Him in creation, ’Without Him was not any thing made that was made.’ He has done this thing■ He has called home your little boy, ’Come up hither!’ Has He not done well in doing this? Your blood-sprinkled heart owns that He has done well, in spite of nature, and you could write, I know, unhesitatingly on his tomb, ’He hath done all things well.’ Dear brother, may you get your will sunk in His■may you find your loss supplied by the full Presence of Him who has given you Himself as your portion. May you grow sick of His love, which is better than the life of a thousand beloveds. May you feel powerfully drawn now by three such cords as are fixed round your heart by three departed ones towards the Resurrection-morning, when you shall see them arise in health, power, incorruption, beauty, glorious likeness to the Lord. You are at present walking through one of earth’s valleys that are dark with the shadow of death, but you can sing in its gloom, ’Thou art with me, I am not alone.’ Lean your weary head as well as your heavy-laden conscience on the Mercy-seat, on the Person of the Giver of rest, as you have taught others to do. The blood, and the Lord who shed that blood, cannot fail to bring intense relief for this is the channel down which love flows without impediment, in full current on its way to you, a sinner and a sorrowful man, holy love, the love of the Holy One for you, brother! The stream seems to murmur as it flows your way, ’I know thy sorrows.’ ’In Me ye shall have peace.’ Hoping to see you very soon, and still remembering you.■Believe me, yours truly in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- COLLACE, Thursday Evening.

’Sub-pastor Pastoris boni’ MY DEAR BROTHER,

■Your kind note grieved me. I did not think you were sunk at present into any depression. Come, fellow-pilgrim, remember how it is written, ’Strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees.’ How will you hold up others? After all, you are the strongest, if you really are feeling quite weak and self-emptied. Are you not, on Scripture principles? And your brother at Collace is certainly anything but strong when he is in too equable a mood. . . . Your sermon to us was felt much by all the people■ or, rather, your three sermons. We were all refreshed. The Lord seemed to speak by you.■In haste, dear brother, yours in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- MY DEAR BROTHER,

■I heard you setting off this morning at an untimely hour, and I trust the Lord made you a ’Barnabas.’ But, brother, do remember the following passage: preach on it next Sabbath, and practise it, Exodus 18:18. . . . Now, may the God of hospitable Abraham be the God that remembers to you all your kindness to travellers and strangers who come under the shadow of

your roof. Remember me to Mr. and Mrs. Moody-Stuart whom I love in the truth.■Yours affectionately in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

Moses was very 'meek' ; hence Exodus 18:24.

N.B.■This also would make a good sermon!

---------- THREE LETTERS TO REV. JOHN MILNE, PERTH, ON HIS RECEIVING A CALL TO GO ABROAD

I COLLACE, Jan.10th, 1853. Monday Evening. MY DEAR BROTHER,■It may be that my affection for you, and the sort of melancholy that is suggested to my mind by the idea of Perth without you,■it may be that these considerations are influencing my judgment as unconsciously as your loneliness may have influenced yours. Be this as it may, you want me to state to you how the matter now looks to me.

Well, then, my impressions continue to be these:

(1) All plans originating in a time of despondency are to be suspected, prima facie. There is so little of faith in low spirits. I find that at the time when the Spirit separated Paul and Barnabas for a mission, they were vigorous and full of work■ 'ministering and fasting'■publicly and privately, full of energetic service. And, on the other hand, when Elijah in low spirits goes to the Desert and then to Horeb, he is sent back again, so that we soon find him sitting on Carmel once more.

(2) Your thoughts about Calcutta did not seem to me to amount to a call made upon you by the Spirit. Of course I may be quite mistaken, I merely say what I feel, so far as knowledge guides me. You were not bent towards Calcutta, were you, by any great and preponderating sense of the claims of that field over all others? Was not your feeling rather one of merely decided admission that the scheme was important beyond doubt? In other words, you thought you felt uprooted, and you saw you might as well be planted down in Calcutta as anywhere else, perhaps giving its claims a preference in the circumstances?

Still, was there a drawing■is there at this moment a drawing such as you might from its peculiar strength and tenacity interpret to be the result of the Spirit calling you with a Macedonian cry? The brethren with whom I met to-day prayed for you, asking 'counsel' that you might not mistake, and 'might,' that you may execute what you see to be the Lord's will. Perhaps, on the whole, they were more ready than I to admit the probability that our Master may have made use of your very loneliness for shutting your eye on the home field, and opening it on the vast fields of India, for no one felt otherwise than that Calcutta, and all connected with it, is of very peculiar and very vast importance, and that were you there, you might be a most suitable instrument for the work there. Dear brother, you are prayed for. May the Lord get all the glory in the end.■Yours truly in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

Whatever be the result I can say of you as Paul could, Php 1:7: echo en te kardia umas. 'I have you in my heart,' and will feel if you go that I am more a pilgrim than before, waiting for our 'gathering together in Him.'

II COLLACE, Wednesday. MY DEAR BROTHER,

■ 'Be strong, yea, be strong.' Touch the hem of His garment now again, and draw out virtue for this present trial of thy spirit, O man of God. Will you let me know how things look to you now? You are often remembered, and the God who so graciously sat in the Cloudy Pillar, unasked and uninvited, to guide His Israel then, will, beyond doubt, guide His own (and guide His Moses and Aaron) when daily besought to do so. Have you tokens of the Master's presence? What has He given you of sympathy and of His peace? Dear brother, dearer always the oftener the idea of separation comes in, may you find that Christ 'has need of you,' whatever be the place and scene of labour. Is the whole matter to come on next Wednesday at the Presbytery ?■Believe me, ever yours truly in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

III COLLACE, April 6th, 1853. MY DEAR BROTHER,

■Is this the last note I am to address to you at Perth? You do not know how lonely I sometimes imagine myself likely to feel when you are gone. Perth will seem like what Dundee has long been to me■somehow an empty hall. Once this region was a very pleasant one, in the days of Hamilton, Manson, Miller, Cormick, Cumming, William Burns, and, above all, Robert M'Cheyne. You and Macdonald are the only palm-trees still remaining. And as for Robert Macdonald, he is in a manner out from among us this good while past. And you, brother, are now on the eve of departure, leaving one solitary member of that once happy brotherhood behind. I think I shall be more of a pilgrim than I ever was■a Gershom. If the Master enables me to sing 'All my springs are in Thee,' the pilgrimage will be a peaceful one nevertheless, and will end in the Kingdom, and 'our gathering together in Him.' Here is a journeying text for you, 1 Thessalonians 3:11: 'Now God Himself, even our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, direct your way!' What a Pillar-Cloud to lead you to the City of Palaces, and then onward to the 'City of the Great King.' ■Believe me, dear brother, your affectionate brother in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- GLASGOW, 8th Oct. 1858. MY DEAR BROTHER,

■Are we never to hear anything of you? You wrote oftener in India than you do now. Were your letters then the luxuriant growth of Eastern soil? And has the north nipped the vegetation of your pen? Brother, this will not do,■ iron sharpens iron, ■you must let us hear how it fares with you.

I was greatly struck with the news of the death of David Sandeman. How soon at rest! We would have thought that that strong-built frame would have stood many shocks of disease, and that his Master would have kept His servant for many years of labour. His single-mindedness, and zeal, and love to the Lord Jesus often struck me with a sort of impression approaching to undesigned upbraiding, that is, I felt rebuked by his warmer devotedness. And so happy always in his Lord. 'Rejoice evermore' was on his face wherever you met him. Do you know that he was much blessed at Hillhead, near this place? The people talk of him and Mr. Allan as men of God who carried on a great work here. And is it not remarkable that these two died within six weeks of each other? ... Why are we spared? Are not the showers of the Spirit in America indications of the Lord hastening the gathering in of sheaves before the winter? We may expect the like in Scotland 'ere the great and notable day of the Lord come.' . . Yours in the Lord Jesus, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- GLASGOW, 27th Feby. 1864. MY DEAR BROTHER,

■Your little epistle a few days since was very pleasant,■like a gentle shower in the heat of summer,■telling the thoughts of your brotherly heart as well as the wanderings of your feet. . . . We get occasionally at present some tokens of the Master's favour, though we often pray, 'When the poor and needy. . . . their tongue faileth for thirst.' In so dry a land nothing but heavy, heavy showers will take thirst away.

We lost the other day Mr. William Munsie, a true Caleb, one that always brought up a good report of the Land. How many of late are gone to the 'mountain of myrrh.' James Crawford was no ordinary loss. John Bonar, too, is a great blank in our circle. Everything bids us 'hasten unto the coming of the Day of God.'

'The foundation of God standeth sure.' The Word is as sweet as ever, is it not, and Christ still the chief among ten thousand? Have you still a place for me in your Saturday evening prayer for brethren? Remember this is our rule. 'So much the more as ye see the day approaching.'

Give my kindest brotherly love to Mrs. Milne.■Yours truly in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- GLASGOW, 7th Febry. 1865. MY DEAR BROTHER,■Thanks for to-day's token of remembrance. . . . Your brief stay with us was very cheering and useful. Many of your words are lingering in many memories and hearts. Our house is not what it was■at least to me■but the Lord is the same. O that I may be able to use Him as the true and only Lethe, in drinking of which I shall forget what I have lost. Brother, pray still for me, and sister Barbara, pray too. Not a day has closed since 14th October during which my heart has not felt its sore want. But I hear Him reminding me, 'Behold, I come quickly!'

Now I must run away to my class. 'Weeping must not hinder sowing,' said Matthew Henry.■Yours truly in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- GLASGOW, 20th Oct. 1866. MY DEAR BROTHER,

■I read your letter last night with a kind of awe, as being the writing of one who had been almost within the veil. You have seen and felt what others of us are strangers to. But do you know one thing, I have of late noticed that there may be a good reason alleged for even desiring to die! What is it? It is this. If (as you once thought you might) a brother outstrip us ('pre-vent') in getting to the sepulchre, he shall also outstrip us ('pre-vent,' 1 Thessalonians 4:15, phtano) in rising again from the dead. For 'the dead in Christ shall rise first' ; they first shall hear His voice, or at any rate they shall be the first to put on the resurrection-body. Is it not so? Yet, after all, 'the twinkling of an eye' may make all the difference, and 'then we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall be caught up along with them.' You see they do get a sort of pre-eminence, as if to make up for their having been called away ere the Lord arrived.

I do give thanks with you and with Mrs. Milne, and with many everywhere for the Lord's mercy to you. This is our Communion week. Is it yours also? I think it is. Then let us get all the more the help of your sympathies and prayers. 'Joshua redivivus' must not fight Amalek at present, but lie still and pray for the fighters. . .■Yours truly in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: Rev. John Purves, Jedburgh (1)

Letters: Rev. John Purves, Jedburgh (1) DURING THE VISIT OF THE DEPUTATION TO THE HOLY LAND JERUSALEM, June 17th, 1839. MY DEAR JOHN,■I scarcely know how to write when sending you a letter from Jerusalem and Mount Zion. Our present residence is actually on the hill of Zion, and our windows look directly on the Mount of Olives. I feel like a man who has got before him more than he can use; or, as you have often felt, when you have got some full passage of the Bible, wherein you see there is tenfold more to be found than you are able to explain. To be in this land, especially to be in Jerusalem, is really to have the Word of God open before you in another form. And it is deep joy to be in the midst of the hills and valleys where the Lord's voice so often spoke to man, and to be in the city where Immanuel's mighty work was done. We had some expectations, in our setting out, that we might see in passing Rome and Athens, and the Pyramids of Egypt, ■indeed we actually were within about half a day's journey of them all,■but God led us past these, as if He meant to make us know by experience Psalms 87:4-5 : 'I will mention Rahab and Babylon■but of Zion it shall be said.' As you might expect, the interest of this land is beyond anything in the world to a believer. It was remarkable that the first night we entered it we heard the singing of birds on every side, and soon after the turtle-dove,■so that really Bunyan's description of Beulah (remember that is the true name of Israel's land, Isaiah 62:4) seemed realised. 'We entered the country of Beulah, whose air was very sweet and pleasant. Their way lying directly through it, they solaced themselves there for a season; yea, here they heard the, song of birds, and saw every day the flowers appear on the earth, and heard the voice of the turtle in the land. Here, too, they heard voices out of the city, loud voices saying, "Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh." '

We saw at once that in the Song of Songs, written for the Church of Israel, Song of Solomon 2:11-12, the imagery was taken from their own land. However, it was only a spot here and there that brought such descriptions to our mind. In most places the land is desolate, though it is splendid in its very desolation. We entered Palestine on May 29th, and on the fourth day found ourselves passing through the Valley of Sorek, and yet not a vine to be seen. I remembered immediately Hosea 2:12: 'I will destroy her vines and her fig-trees,' etc. And rejoiced also in the promise (ver. 15) that, after the time she has been in Achor, the vineyards shall be restored. . . . But I must hasten to tell you of Jerusalem. On drawing near I felt very serious. The first look we got happened to be from the Jaffa side where very little is seen■so that I felt that day nothing peculiar except the site of ■the mountains that stand round Jerusalem. That moment the faithfulness of God appeared a vivid reality. . . . We spent ten days in it and its neighbourhood, and every day the scenes seemed fresh to me. The Mount of Olives is, perhaps, the place of deepest interest. . . .We often visited Gethsemane at its foot. . . . We could easily see how it would be a place where the disciples often came to meet Jesus (John 18:2, ' place of rendezvous'), and then, when all had come, they together went over the hill to Bethany. . . . I did as you asked me■one morning I went alone to it, and prayed for you specially and your people. Dear John, return my prayer■pour yours out for me, for my soul is dry. . . . Last Sabbath we enjoyed a great privilege; I am sure you would

have rejoiced to have been with us■we partook of the Lord's Supper together in the little church formed here by the English missionaries. I had the very great privilege of opening my lips to speak of Immanuel, in the city where He died, and is to reign. I took John 14:2-3. It was a day of peculiar refreshment and joy. . . . But I must leave off at present; for I have to write letters to some others from Jerusalem. . . . Ask for us more faith, love, zeal. I wonder from time to time at the hand of God in bringing me to the 'Promised Land.' I hope it is a type and pledge that He will one day so carry me to Immanuel Himself. The one is as free grace as the other. When you pray for me, particularly mention the case of my people at Collace, for often my soul is sad when I think of them.■Believe me, my dear John, yours truly in the flesh and in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

I prayed for your people more than once while at Jerusalem, and often, too, at different stages of.our way. They came into my mind sometimes in connection with you, sometimes in connection with the Sabbath evening sermons I used to give on the Land. I don't think that I ever in these discourses overstated the reality. Remember me to the saints among you. . Tell H. B. and the other Sabbath-school teachers that I do not forget them even 'in the land of Jordan and the Hermonites.' If ever they got one cup of cold water from me to their souls, I have a claim on their prayers. I often think of your prayer-meetings. Is there any sign of the Spirit poured out?

05. Letters: Rev. Malcolm White, Blairgowrie (1)

Letters: Rev. Malcolm White, Blairgowrie (1) STRACHUR, 28th August 1879. MY DEAR MR. WHITE,■One word to assure Mrs. White and yourself that you are not forgotten in your sorrow. 'The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away.' When the Lord Jesus returns, He will bring with Him the little ones who fell asleep in Him, and how changed they will be! When my little boy died I remember Dr. Somerville read at the funeral some passages about Joseph taken from his sorrowing parents, and contrasted with that time of sadness the after-joy and wondrous delight when his father saw Joseph in all his glory! Even so, when your little boy returns with Christ at His coming, how grand and glorious he will be! what knowledge! what holy beauty! May the Comforter fill your heart with His presence, enabling you both to say to Him, 'Even so, Father!'

Yours truly in Him, ANDREW A. BONAR.

Chapter 72

05. Letters: Rev. William Armstrong, Rutherglen (2)

Letters: Rev. William Armstrong, Rutherglen (2) 20 INDIA STREET, 1st Decr.1885. MY DEAR MR. ARMSTRONG,

■ It was very kind in Mrs. Armstrong to write to me, letting me know that you are making some progress. I wonder what your meditations have been. Did you ever see the little book I enclose (Thoughts in Prospect of Death, by D.Rintoul)■ the observations of one (I remember him in my college days in Edinburgh) who thought himself drawing nearer and nearer Eternity, like one in a boat gliding down the river to the sea? Perhaps you will have some 'thoughts' to give us. You may have got some fresh and suggestive views of the ministry■ 'thoughts by a minister laid aside for some months.' You no doubt get special visits of the Master, for He says, 'In the time of trouble I will hide I him in My pavilion, in the secret of My Tabernacle (far, far in!) will I hide him. With kindest thanks to Mrs. Armstrong and brotherly sympathy for you, dear Trophimus,■

Believe me, yours in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

GLASGOW, 1886. MY DEAR MR. ARMSTRONG,

■It is very kind in you to write me. At our last prayer-meeting (it was in my house), we all remembered you and offered special prayer for you. But you must not be at all cast down (Mrs. Armstrong : 'Easy to say this, but he is not laid aside yet himself! '). You are like Samuel Rutherford feeling so keenly his 'dumb Sabbaths,' and yet these days became vocal with strains of heavenly poetry, as he got time to muse upon the love of Him who had loved His servant 'out of the pit of corruption' (see Isaiah 38:17; margin, Hebrew). Who knoweth but you have been drawn aside in order to bring down showers by your strong cries and intercession for the Land; the Church, your Congregation, your Brethren, etc. Do you know I almost envied you when I read your letter, for often I get scarcely an hour free from interruption through the week, and it seems so desirable to have every day many hours for meditation and prayer.

Kindest sympathy as well as kindest regards to Mrs. Armstrong. Sing Psalms 42:11 and Psalms 43:5, and when praying for the brethren remember me also■Yours truly, dear brother, ANDREW A. BONAR.

Chapter 73

05. Letters: The Misses Church, Glasgow (1)

Letters: The Misses Church, Glasgow (1) GLASGOW, 16th Jan. 1884. MY DEAR SISTERS,

■An old minister, whom you have had some knowledge of, wrote to his friend a salutation that I offer to you■ 'Grace, mercy, and peace shall be with you.' He did not say, 'May grace, mercy, and peace be with you,' but he said, 'Grace shall be with you (see margin), mercy and peace.' He was sure of it; for he knew that the trees whose roots are in the waters cannot but be kept fresh and green. Have you been finding much of late in the 'Law of the Lord' ? You know that the Word is called 'the Oracles of God,' and this is just the description of the utterances of God from the Holy of Holies.

Read your Bibles, then, with the same reverence as filled the soul of the High Priest when he went into the very presence of the Holy One of Israel. You were studying the interviews of Paul with his Master, and you made out six, taking in the angel's visit to him as representing Christ. I made out a seventh visit■at the time of his trial and approach of his end, from 2 Timothy 4:17 : 'The Lord stood by me and strengthened me.' Now, as the angel (Acts 27:23) really stood by Paul in his cabin, so was not this a real standing-by in personal presence? The Lord Jesus came into his prison-cell, and just as the other angel in Gethsemane 'strengthened' the Master, probably by a message from the Father, so did Christ do to His servant there. Are you learning some peculiar lessons at Bournemouth? Tell me some of them, for 'to communicate to him that teacheth' is a duty of every hearer (Galatians 6:6).

It often seems strange never to see your faces■nor hear your voices■never to be calling at your well-known house!

Sometimes pray for us, and that will be equivalent to a kind call from you, for speaking to the Lord about friends is as kind an act as speaking directly to friends.

■Believe me, ever yours truly in Him who loved the sisters at Bethany, ANDREW A. BONAR.

05. Letters: The Misses Leiper, Crossford (1)

Letters: The Misses Leiper, Crossford (1) GLASGOW, 17th Feb.1886.

DEAR SISTERS 'in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ' ! Do you not hear the Master saying, as He points downwards to our earth and to your dwelling, 'Our friend Lazarus sleepeth! but I am going to awaken him out of his sleep.' Your brother shall rise again, and that day is coming nearer and nearer. Very likely you may be ready to say in your mourning, 'Lord, if Thou hadst only shown us this or that, we might have been better prepared for the stroke!' Martha and Mary had each of them, her 'If Thou' ■but Jesus quietly put that 'if ' aside, and turned their thoughts to their Lord's gracious purpose in it all. 'Said I not unto thee that, if thou wilt believe (for I do not ask thee to feel at present that nothing could be better than what has happened, but simply to believe it is so), thou shalt see the glory of God?

What a glorious morning will the Resurrection be! Not a tear, not a regret, nothing but joy and praise and thanksgiving as we meet one risen friend after another restored to us in everlasting health and holy beauty, with our Elder Brother in the midst smiling on us with infinite affection as He reminds us, 'Said I not unto thee that, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God? '■Yours truly, with deepest sympathy,

ANDREW A. BONAR

Chapter 75

05. Letters: Written for one in spiritual despair (1)

Letters: Written for one in spiritual despair (1) GLASGOW, 9th Oct. 1872. MY DEAR MISS M.,

■. . . I read with great interest your own letter about your friend who seems so near despair, and this morning your sister has given me more particulars from your friend's letter to you. It is a case that reminds me of the Saviour's words, 'This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.' It is a case that may well draw out all the sympathies and continued prayers of believing friends in her behalf. Evidently there is something to be laid down to the state of her health, and it might be well for her to remember that Satan, the accuser, does take advantage of such circumstances. Satan has, no doubt, had something to do with her confusion of mind and the bitter things she writes against herself. I wonder if she would admit that in all despair on this side the grave there is rank pride? The sinner is refusing to be treated as an absolute sinner, one full of selfishness, hard-heartedness, meanness, self-deception (a 'living lie,' as she herself writes, in God s view), a sinner who has never repented aright or felt anything aright. This is the sinner who furnishes Christ with His opportunity of manifesting grace. Pride of conscience is as subtle as pride of reason; it says, 'I cannot, I will not, no, I will not, I never will, admit and believe that Christ's grace will go so far as to welcome me, who am an absolute mass of guilt and rotten corruption.' This thought and feeling of the awakened conscience is pride, rank pride. To say 'I have spent hours struggling with despair,' and 'I am weak and worn with the agony of conflict,' indicates the very opposite state of mind from what is found in a receiver of grace. 'Come to Me all that labour'■struggle, in agony of conflict. Submit, only submit, to be done struggling. We must receive the kingdom of God as a little child receives what is held out to him, or as a little child allows one to put his arms round him and lift him up.

Once more; your friend says 'I feel I have never been a child of God;' but she forgets that we may be God's children when we do not feel that we are. 'We are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus;' 'As many as receive Him to them He gives privilege to become sons of God.' Luther, with his eye on this truth, repelled Satan's question: 'Martin Luther, do you this day feel that you are a child of God?' 'No, Satan, I do not feel that I am, but yet I know that I am.'

O that your friend may, by the Spirit of truth, be enabled to cease from every effort and every struggle, submitting to the Righteousness of God. Will she not let the Sun of Righteousness shine on her? Will she proudly shut her despairing eyes and not look upon the blood that cleanses from all sin, and the forgiving love of Him whose message to her is, 'Come to me; I will give you rest.'

Excuse me for writing somewhat hurriedly. May your own soul be blest with 'grace for grace,' day by day, out of His fulness.

■Yours truly in the Lord Jesus,

ANDREW A. BONAR

05. Mr. James Mudie, Montrose (3)

Mr. James Mudie, Montrose (3) COLLACE, May 31st, 1844. MY DEAR BROTHER,

■. . . I did not observe that there were five Sabbaths in June. I suppose therefore I that our Communion will be the last day of June. Now this would leave me the interval of one Sabbath to come to Dr. Brewster. . . . But I find that to be absent that Sabbath would not be possible without risking some evil consequences. And indeed I am afraid that already too much moving about has so shaken this vessel that the living water does not come up to the brim or flow over on others. My soul gets weary. O to be as those above who seem to grow holier and stronger by every act they do in their heavenly service ! 'His servants serve Him,' and all the while they 'see His face,' and His 'name' becomes brighter on their foreheads. They get more and more of the look and air of true children of such a Father. Come to us this Communion again. Perhaps you would impart some spiritual gift, and perhaps you would obtain some. My brother from Kelso (Horatius Bonar) is to be with me. Kindest regards to Mrs. Mudie. Remember me to the 'holy brethren,' the Lord's children among you. Is your servant girl walking in the truth ?■Believe me, dear brother, yours in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

(A servant who was one day carrying Dr. Bonar's bag for him to the coach or train. He spoke some words to her about her soul, which were the means of her conversion.) ---------- COLLACE, Jan. 20th, 1847. MY DEAR BROTHER,

■It is unkind in me not to have written sooner. It is not because I forget you or Ferryden, (Dr. Bonar twice visited Ferryden, near Montrose, during the remarkable revivals there) which is your diocese in some measure. . . . Salute that precious flock in my name. Say to Miss P - 'His way is in the sea and His path in the great waters, and His footsteps are not known. Yet He leads His people as a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.' Read the whole psalm■the seventy- seventh ■and take courage. Say to those that have rested on the Lord Jesus, 'Run the race looking unto Jesus, the Author and the Finisher of your faith.' Say to those still groping in darkness, 'The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God' (2 Thessalonians 3:5). The Holy Spirit show you the harbour for sin-tossed souls, viz., the open love of the Father which He holds out to you in His Beloved Son. Say to those still unsaved, 'O generation of vipers (see Acts 28:3-4, venomously hating God), flee from the wrath to come' (Luke 3:7). Will our greatly honoured and revered and beloved friend, Dr. Brewster, let me send these messages? It is only Timothy's message to Paul's sheep.

Now, brother, for yourself. One word only, Acts 20:35, Paul's words in closing his address. 'It is more blessed,' said our Master, 'to give than to receive.' And then they prayed. Is not this as if he had said, 'Our Master delights to give; it is His blessedness to give; come, then, let us kneel and ask Him for some gift.' So be it with you. Kindest regards to Mrs. Mudie 'till the Daybreak.' ■Yours truly in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

---------- GLASGOW, 18th Nov. 1859. MY DEAR FRIEND,

■Your letter was most interesting and gladdening, you see in it a proof of the great principle to which Psalms 74:2 refers: 'Lift up thy feet to■this Mount Zion in which Thou hast dwelt.' The Lord will yet pour a greater Pentecost shower on Israel's Land and people, even because He gave the first shower,■and so you are finding that He returns to Ferryden where He formerly wrought. But how remarkable is this work among you! The cases of persons struck may be meant there, as elsewhere, to draw attention, and bring together the careless. In itself, don't you think, the case of one struck down amounts to no more than awakening or deep conviction? It is not conversion in itself. We will pray for you, and perhaps you will let us hear again how the work progresses. It is not in my power to leave my post here at present. The Lord is gathering in His elect quickly. Tell men, dear brother, that Jesus of Nazareth passes by, and it is now or never with thousands! How Dr. Brewster would rejoice to witness his old sphere of labour drenched in these heavy showers! I think I hear and see him as he stood at the Communion Table, the last time I was with him, saying 'Come and see!' . . . Yours truly in the Lord, ANDREW A. BONAR.

06.00. The Person of Christ

The Person of Christ

Andrew Bonar

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Andrew Bonar

Andrew Bonar The Person of Christ - PREFACE IN this new Edition no change of any importance has been made beyond the correction of errata, and extending the texts quoted. The object of the book is to draw more attention to the great subject of connecting at all times the Person of Christ with His work. This is a point which the experience of the most solid believers has testified to as of vast importance. Toplady quotes the following case from the diary of one who afterwards preached Christ, Mr.Thomas Cole. Listen to his interesting statement : - '" I was convinced I could be saved no other way than by grace, if I could but find grace enough. But at that time I saw more in my own sin than in God's mercy. But this put me on a further inquiry after the grace of God, because my life lay upon it: and then I was brought to the Gospel. When, however, I came to the Gospel, I met with the law in it; that is, I was for turning the Gospel into law. I began to settle myself upon Gospel-duties, such as repentance, humiliation, believing, praying; and (I know not how) I forgot the promise of grace which first brought me to the Gospel. Soon I found I could neither believe nor pray as the Gospel required. While I was in this plunge, it pleased the Lord to direct me to study the Person of Christ, whom I looked on as the great undertaker in the work of man's salvation! And truly here I may say, as Paul did, 'It pleased God to reveal His Son in me.' God overcame my heart with this. I saw so much mercy in His mercy, so much love in His love, so much grace in His grace, that I knew not what to liken it to. And here my heart broke, I knew not how! Before this faith came, I knew not how to secure myself against past, present, and future sins: but there was that largeness of grace, that all-sufficiency of mercy, that infinity of

righteousness, discovered to me in Christ, that I found sufficient for all the days of my life."

GLASGOW, June, 1858.

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Chapter 78

06.01. The Person of Christ is the Essence of the Glad Tidings

The Person of Christ

Andrew Bonar

Chapter 1.

Statement of the fact that the Person of Christ is the essence of the glad tidings. From the beginning, the Gospel has come to the awakened sinner with the same consciousness of important news to tell, as that messenger who ran to David, after the battle of Mahanaim, exclaiming "All is well !" But even as the burden of that message brought by Ahimaaz was simply victory, without any narrative of details, so was the Old Testament proclamation of the good news to our earth. There was still need of a Cushi to give details; and Cushi did come upon the heels of Ahimaaz, telling that the essence of the victory lay in the fact of the leader of the host being himself slain. It is thus the New Testament has overtaken the Old, proclaiming "Tidings, O earth! Tidings! It is the Son of God who has died, satisfying the Law of His Father, and establishing His throne." In the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:32) Paul announced to the intently listening audience, "We declare unto you glad tidings !" and forthwith added, that the promise made to the fathers was now fulfilled in Jesus risen. It was as if he had said, "The voice from the excellent glory cries, Hear the beloved Son! and speaks of nothing but what He is, has, and has done." That vessel which has endured all the storms of wrath, that ark which has borne unmoved the shock of cataracts from the opened windows of heaven, and depths breaking up below, contains everything fitted to meet the sinner’s need; and in proportion as the Holy Ghost reveals this Person to the awakened sinner, there will come to light a store of all things suited to the cravings of an immortal soul. When the sinner has got any clear discovery of this glorious Person, he is a saved man; for so we find written in Galatians 1:13, Galatians 1:15-16, "Ye have heard of my conversation in time past. . . . But it pleased God . . . to reveal His Son in me." Matthew 16:16, "Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven."

Resting on this Person for salvation is called "Faith in Jesus Christ." In this faith, there is an intellectual act - namely, the apprehending of the meaning of what is stated concerning Jesus. But this apprehension of the meaning of what is stated, or testified, concerning Jesus, is but the avenue that leads on to the magnificent mansion. It leads the soul to the Person of whom these things are declared. It never is the belief of bare propositions that saves the soul ; for these have to do only with the understanding. Propositions, however weighty, must guide us onward to the Person who is the essence of the testimony; and they are made use of for this end by the same Holy Spirit who enlightens our once carnal understanding to see the real truth.*

* "Though faith be radically in the understanding, yet it operates on the will which embraces the object" (FISHER’S Catechism). "Faith is begun in the head, but not perfected till it comes into the

heart" (ROGERS of Dedham). "Faith is not so much a disposition of the mind toward the truth, as a disposition of the heart toward Christ, produced by means of the truth" (SIEVEWRIGHT). "The soul in believing closes with the Person of Christ. He is the principal object, though not the immediate object of faith" (FRASER of Brae). The belief of the testimony, or record, concerning the Son of God, our Saviour, is the porch of the building, through which we pass into the audience-chamber and meet the Living Inhabitant, full of light, and life, and love.

There is a twofold remedy required to meet the exigencies of a fallen soul.

1st, The soul must feel entirely delivered from that guilt which has compelled the Holy God to withdraw. The sinner's soul is by nature laden with guilt, the guilt of original and actual sin; and until this guilt is altogether taken away, there can be no freedom of access to God. But remove this barrier, and then the Holy God may meet the sinner, and the sinner may run to the open arms of the Holy God. This is the bringing of the conscience to solid rest.

2nd, The soul has feelings, emotions, affections, which constitute what we call in common language the heart of the man. The heart, then, must be brought to its rest, as well as the conscience; and it will be brought to rest, if you can find for it an object vast enough, rich enough, and so accommodated to its frame as to give ample scope for the exercise of all its powers, and the play of all its feelings.

Now, both these ends are answered when the soul discovers the Person of the God-man. There it is that the twofold remedy is found. For now, the conscience, enabled by the Holy Spirit to discern and examine the treasures stored up in the God-man Mediator, finds all the materials needful to its pacification and rest, inasmuch as His obedience to the law and the satisfaction rendered by Him for dishonour done to it, are efficacious beyond measure. And next, when enabled by the same Spirit of truth to explore the wealth of sympathy, and tenderness, and brotherly feeling, wherewith the God-man is fraught, and which is given forth from the side of His humanity, the man finds therein such an object as his heart craved, an object on which his heart can repose.

It is now that he tastes "The Bread of Life." It is only now that he knows the meaning of making the Saviour his meat and drink (John 6:52); for it is now that he has found out the entire remedy for his case in the person of a Mediator, who unites the human nature with the Divine, and uses both in dealing with man. Finding flesh and blood (and, of course, all that is peculiar to a frame wherein flesh and blood are ingredients) in a Saviour, whose doing, dying, and rising again brought in everlasting righteousness, the man can say - " Every part of my nature has been thought upon, and provision has been made for all my feelings and faculties, as well as conscience: this is indeed meat and drink to me! His flesh is meat indeed! His blood is drink indeed!" Our purpose, then, is to enter into details whereby we may show that the Person of Christ is, and has always been, the essence of the Gospel. The glad tidings of great joy all cluster round that Person; invitations and calls draw us to Him; and warrants for believing the Gospel are in reality testimonies, the drift of which is mainly this - to fix our eye upon that Person's self, and assure us of the capabilities of His heart and arm. And no wonder that it should be so; for He is GOD manifest in the flesh. To see Him is to see GOD in the attitude of redemption. To see him is to see the GOD of holy love putting Himself in a position wherein He might be able, justly and honourably, to save sinners. To see Him is to see Godhead finding a way of coming to sinners with open arms, and yet remaining as holy, and just, and true, as from all eternity. To show that

this is the essence of the Gospel may be important alike to saints who already fear the Lord, and to sinners who are only groping for Him. Both are thus led directly to confront God, - " God manifest in the flesh," in "whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." The saint finds that here he floats upon an ocean of grace, and that the more constantly he abides here, the more is he blessed. The seeking sinner finds that his perplexities are cleared away, when he is dealing, not with abstract truth, nor with cold statements, but with a Person, and that person full of grace and truth.

"Come, now" (come, I pray you; come, I beseech you), "let us reason together, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 1:18). Here are two parties before us - not one party dealing with the words and declarations of another, but two parties confronting each other. It is a meeting of spirit with spirit - the spirit of man with God who is spirit. It is the living man coming to hear the living God tell His heart and ways.

Bunyan, in his "Pilgrim's Progress," represents Christian, when relieved of his burden at the cross, singing with joy - "Blest cross! blest sepulchre! blest rather be THE MAN that there was put to shame for me." And in his "Instruction for the Ignorant," the following dialogue occurs : - Question. If such a poor sinner as I am would be saved from the wrath to come, how must I believe?

Answer. Thy first question should be, on whom must I believe? John 9:35-36, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?"

Q. On whom, then, must I believe?

A. On the Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. Who is Jesus Christ, that I might believe on Him?

A. He is the only-begotten Son of God.

Q. Why must I believe on Him?

A. Because He is the Saviour of the world.

Q. How is He the Saviour of the world?

A. By the Father's designation and sending; for God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Q. How did He come into the world?

A. In man's flesh - in which flesh He fulfilled the law, died for our sins, conquered the devil and death, and obtained eternal redemption for us.

Q. But is there no other way to be saved but by believing in Jesus Christ?

A. There is no other name given under heaven, among men, whereby we must be saved. And therefore he that believeth not shall be damned. Acts 4:12, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Mark 16:16, "But he that believeth not shall be damned." John 3:18, John 3:36, "He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not

believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Q. What is believing on Jesus Christ?

A. It is the receiving of Him, with what is in Him, as the gift of God to thee, a sinner. John 1:12, "To as many as receive Him, even to them that believe on His name, He gave power to become sons of God."

Q. What is in Jesus Christ to encourage me to receive Him?

A. Infinite righteousness to justify thee, and the Spirit without measure to sanctify thee.

Q. Is this made mine if I receive Christ?

A. Yes, if you receive him as God offereth Him to thee.

Q. How doth God offer Him to me?

A. Even as a rich man freely offereth an alms to a beggar - and so must thou receive Him. John 6:32-35, "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven; for the bread of God is He that cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." Then said they unto Him, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." And Jesus said unto them, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst."

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06.02. The Gospel, from the Fall to the Day of the Apostles, was Found in the Person.....

The Person of Christ

Andrew Bonar

Chapter 2 The Gospel, from the Fall to the Day of the Apostles, was found in the Person of the Saviour. In the New Testament, the name of "Mystery" is often attached to the truths that form the Gospel. The chief part of this mystery, or "truth hidden from eternity in God" (Ephesians 3:9), concerned the Person of the Saviour. When the real nature of this person was unfolded, other things which had been dark began forthwith to emerge from their obscurity and appear distinct. It could not but be plain now why blood should be the means of atonement, since the blood is the out-poured life, and the out-poured life is the life of Him who is the Son of God. The blood poured out in every sacrifice spoke of some one giving his life; but the nature of the effect of this blood-shedding could be understood only when the person, in his worth and dignity, became known.

Hence it was that all patriarchs and ancient saints were directed unceasingly to the Living One as the well-spring of their bliss. Their hands were every day fully employed in offering sacrifice, but yet all the while their eye was looking beyond that sacrifice for some one yet to come, who was to cast light on this service and make them "perfect as pertaining to the conscience" (Hebrews 9:9). Their thoughts (however confusedly) passed from the types of the work of Christ on to the expected Person of Christ. And hence Paul declares, the discovery of who this coming one was, to be the "making manifest of the mystery." When writing to the Romans (Romans 16:23), he thus speaks, "According to my gospel, and the preaching of (i.e., proclamation concerning) the Lord Jesus Christ; according to the revelation of the mystery, which had been kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest."

It seems that ancient saints were aware that the Person of the Coming One was to cast light on all the ceremonials and ordinances which they were taught to observe. For Peter, in telling of "salvation," states that the prophets who inquired and searched diligently into it, bent their chief attention toward "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter 1:10-11). And the same is implied by the words of our Lord to His disciples in reference to His being now at length among them in the flesh, when turning to them He said, "Blessed are the eyes that see the things which ye see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them" (Luke 10:24).

Onward from the hour when first the announcement of a Saviour was made in the words, "The seed of the Woman shall bruise the head of the serpent," the anxious inquiries of all saints were directed toward this person, to know who and what He was to be. The case of the Old Testament believers was like that of exiles, who had got the promise of return from banishment, but who saw

not the means by which they were to be transported homeward from their dreary island of captivity. At length one whose eye has looked through the telescope comes among them, points them to a speck in the distant horizon, telling them that yonder is the vessel sent to carry them home. They have had intimations of their sovereign's pardon and goodwill already, but this is the most satisfactory proof of it. Accordingly, hour after hour do they keep their eye fixed on that distant object, and their joy rises in proportion as they are able distinctly to discern that yonder speck is indeed a vessel, bearing colours that proclaim from what land it has come. Having in their possession letters sealed with the king's seal, which speak of actual deliverance to be brought them when such a vessel should touch their coasts, they reckon its arrival to be their grand hope, and expect to find therein everything needed for their immediate recall. This was the position of Old Testament saints: they were gazing on this speck in the distant ocean. The vessel was seen by Job a little more distinctly than by previous patriarchs, when he sang, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He will stand on the earth at the latter day;" and yet more plainly by those who heard that He was to be "Abraham's seed," and "Shiloh" from the tribe of Judah, and "David's son," as well as "David's Lord." A still clearer sight was gained when Isaiah stood and cried, "To us a child is born, to us a son is given, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God!" (Isaiah 9:6). And yet more, when Zechariah declared that he heard the Almighty call Him "The Man that is My Fellow!" (Zechariah 13:7). The vessel was now seen with joyful distinctness, and the hope of the Lord's banished ones grew brighter and brighter, as Malachi (Malachi 3:1) cried, "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple." In revealing salvation to men, in early ages, the Lord arranged His discoveries in such a way as necessarily led them to give the Person of the Redeemer a prominent place in all their thoughts. It was with them more the Redeemer than even redemption. They did not well know how this Noah was to save them, or how he was to guide the ark through floods, rushing from below and from above; and how, over these strange billows, he was finally to land it in the strange harbour of Ararat. But what of this, if they were really trusting themselves to this Noah, and were identified with him in his undertaking? He knew, and he would accomplish all.

It was thus also, in great measure, with the disciples and followers of our Lord in the days of His flesh. They knew amazingly little of His work in its details, but truly they clung to His Person. Is there any hint of their loving any other as they loved Him? They rested on the Shepherd's shoulder, and in so doing were safe. They did not know how this Shepherd was to save them; how He was to deliver them from the lion and the bear, and carry them over the burning desert of wrath; but still, they were safe, because they rested on Him. They clung to the right person, and committed themselves to His wisdom, and power, and love. Was this not the essence of old Simeon's hope of salvation? Was he not the traveller arrived at the sources of the Nile, surveying the fountain from which living waters had flowed, and were yet to flow, to fertilise the earth? When he took up the child Jesus in his arms, the aged saint exclaimed, "Now Thou art letting Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation" (Luke 2:29-30).

What else but a message about His Person was the gospel preached by the Angel at Bethlehem, which sent home the shepherds "glorifying and praising God"? The words were, "A Saviour is born, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). This is what the Angel calls "good tidings of great joy." Let wise men and shepherds, let Mary and Joseph, let Zechariah and Elizabeth, let Anna and Simeon, let all who hear this proclaimed, cling to this Person, and in Him they shall find salvation.

They may not see in what manner, or by what process, He is to save them, but cling to this Person, and all shall be well. The Baptist comes forth. His preaching is a constant pointing to "the Lamb of God." His finger is ever directing men to Him. All good news is yonder, and bliss is in that Person, "the Son of God," who stands among you. He saw the Spirit descend on Him, and ever after bare record that "He was THE SON OF GOD" (John 1:34).

"Herein is great joy for all people! The Person we cling to for salvation turns out to be 'SON OF GOD!' The promised Seed of Abraham, and the Seed of the Woman, in whom all our hope is treasured up, is none other than the SON OF GOD! What may we not expect of Him! How full may our cup now be!" Some such must have been the feelings of those who first saw the glorious truth, especially when the discovery burst fresh upon them.The news would fly from one to another - "The Messiah is none other than God! GOD is manifest in flesh" * (1 Timothy 3:16).

* Even as saints still feel, when the Holy Ghost sets it very vividly before them. Howell Harris, in one of his letters, saith: "O the mystery! That this man is God! He wept. He travelled, bore cold, rain, hunger, and thirst; all reproach, shame, and all other sorrows for me. My loving, everlasting brother! Sure this Lord is my love! My soul within me is lost in wonder, and melts like wax. O this love! This mysterious, unfathomable love!" And little as they knew of the mode of His working, or how He was to proceed in going forward to save them, they clung to His Person closer than ever. As their fathers followed the cloudy pillar, longing to see the face of Him who sat therein, so they followed Jesus, longing to see what He would yet reveal of Himself and of His ways. And they were right in so clinging to Him. Peter was asked, along with his fellow-disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" (Matthew 16:13), obviously with the view of bringing out fully who this Saviour was who appeared under that form. And his reply, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God," drew forth the declaration, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona! Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." So great was the discovery - He that is come to save is God! For such a one must be able to save. He cannot but bring full salvation - a salvation that will have length and breadth in it, height and depth, sufficient every way for a sinner.

It was thus also that Peter made a similar confession on another occasion (John 6:69) with great emphasis: "We believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." He adheres to this Person; and yet so little does he understand the work which that Person is to perform, that on the mention of suffering, and reproach, and death (Matthew 16:21), "that He must suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed," though followed by resurrection, he peremptorily insists that the idea was utterly inconsistent with his Lord's dignity and char- acter. We are ready to think that ignorance of, or mistake regarding, the work of Christ is as hurtful and dangerous as misunderstanding His Person. But the Lord Himself lays somewhat greater stress upon our not mistaking His Person. That Person is the mine; His work is one of the treasures which come to the surface when the mine is wrought.

It was not enough that a Jew confessed Jesus to be the Christ - the Messiah. He might do this and yet be ignorant of the Saviour. He must know Messiah to be SON OF GOD, if he was to know true salvation. For what could Messiah do for sinners if (like the Christ of Socinians) He were only a superior, though extraordinary man - and what could a Messiah do for such sinners as we are, if He were (like the Christ of Arians) only at the top of the angelic scale? We needed a Messiah who could "save to the uttermost," and none other than the SON OF GOD could stretch the cords of

salvation thus far. It is on this account that our Lord Himself says most solemnly in John 8:24, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." He had declared Himself "from above" (John 8:23), and "not of this world," and had said, "I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me" (John 8:16). And now, turning to the cavilling crowd of Pharisees, He looked them in the face, and with awful seriousness and majesty in His tone, assured them, "If ye believe not I am He (the Person whom I have said I am), ye shall die in your sins." But did not the disciples falter oftentimes in their views of His Person? And did not the ancient saints fall short of knowing the Promised Seed to be GOD THE SON? So far this is true. But at least they expected a Saviour from the Lord Jehovah, and were ready to welcome this Person without faltering or hesitation. Perhaps there were none of those saints who had not some idea, however dim, of God being somehow in the salvation promised; and never certainly did any saved men, in any age, deny or slight the Godhead of the Saviour, when revealed to his astonished gaze. Every saved soul has been too glad to find God Himself the Saviour; "Behold God is my salvation," - and seeing Him has said, "I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy will we draw water out of the wells of salvation" (Isaiah 12:2-3).

"Hidden from all ages past Was the Cross’s mystery;

Death a while a veil had cast O’er that first dear family; But they saw Him and believed, And as Lord and God received." The saints’ hopes have, in every age, revolved around "Him that cometh in the name of the Lord." To have the heart fixed on the Lord, and on Him whom He was to send, is the heart and kernel of ancient faith. It is the Old Testament form of our Gospel that we hear when, in the "song of songs," the Spouse dwells upon the Beloved, and repeats and reiterates His praises. Who this Beloved is seems scarcely known; He has a veil on His Person; but, nevertheless, there is a mysterious strength of feeling between this Beloved and those who sing of Him, arising from the secret fact that GOD THE SON is the Beloved under the veil.

"Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved" (Song of Solomon 8:5). This surely is a sketch of Patriarchal and Jewish faith - just as the figure of the "Sheep on the Shepherd’s shoulder," so often appearing on the tombs in the catacombs at Rome, is the symbol of the same faith in New Testament times. When the Apostle John, in his first Epistle, thus writes (John 5:20) to the saints: "And we know that the SON OF GOD is come!" he unquestionably is uttering, and intending to utter, the full gospel-privileges of believers. He says that this distinguished them from the world - viz., they know that the promised Seed had come, and that He was the Son of God. By that time the Church had arrived at clearer light; for John in his gospel (John 6:69) tells of Peter’s glowing animation as he confessed, Thou art Messiah, the Son of the living God; and of Martha’s unhesitating declaration, that, as a matter of course, she, a disciple of the Lord Jesus, believed that He was "The Messiah, the Son of God, who should come into the world." Nor was it otherwise when disciples were able to give more precise details of the Person, as we see in the Ethiopian eunuch’s joyful confession, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God!" We may conceive his feelings - he had journeyed far, many a hundred miles - risking the favour of his queen, and caring little for his place of rank. He had sought rest for his awakened soul in vain, even in Jerusalem at their solemn feasts. But a stranger, a true evangelist, is sent to him, as his chariot rolls lazily and silently over the sandy desert-road towards Gaza, and finds him reading in the fifty-third of Isaiah concerning one "led as a Lamb to the slaughter." The stranger tells him who this was, and how, and why, and when He had been led to death; and proclaims the

tidings, that "this Lamb was Son of God!" What a flash of amazement and delight passes over the Ethiopian's countenance! He is under the teaching of the Holy Ghost (for it was He who was hovering over him, John 6:29-39), and saw in a moment what that fact implied. Here is room for my soul now! Here my burdened spirit may repose.*

* "If you ask why I believe on the Son of God - if you intend what is the formal reason, ground, and warranty, whereon I thus believe in Him, or place my confidence in Him - I say it is only this, that 'He is over all, God blessed for ever.' And were He not so, I could not believe in Him. The divine nature is the reason of it, but His divine Person is the object of it" (OWEN). The Person who is the Lamb is Son of God! Here is not a narrow point of a rock, rising above the surrounding water, but no more than barely sufficient for one to stand upon: here is a broad continent to which the eye sees no limit! With what exultation is he filled in confessing, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God!"

We are wrong, in our day, when we speak more of the work of Christ than of His person - directing more attention to the shadow afforded by the great Rock than to the Rock itself. This is not done in the Apostolic Epistles - there the work is not separated from the worker, but ever kept beside him, and He beside the work.*

* As Augustine (Confess., Book v. 1) says of the other works of God, "The soul bending over the things thou hast made, and passing on to Thee who hast made them, there finds its refreshment and true strength." In Romans 3:22, the righteousness is said to be, not "by faith in the work" of Christ, but "by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe." And again in Romans 3:24, "Justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood." Again, in Romans 1:1, "We have peace through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." Again, in Romans 6:4, "We are buried with Him," or, Romans 6:8, "we are dead with Him."

Union to Him, as our representative, is the very heart of the argument. Or, if the Apostle is writing freely about Christian blessings, as in Ephesians 1:1-23., we are told of being "blessed with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ;" and (Ephesians 1:6-7) of being "accepted in the Beloved, in whom we have redemption."

These men of God, whom the Holy Spirit inspired, lead the sinner to the shade of the Plant of Renown; but all the while they are occupying his attention by pointing out the Plant itself - its majestic form, and glorious growth, and ever green foliage, and the immense sweep of its branches; and while they are thus engaged, the traveller is refreshed tenfold more effectually than if he had been content merely to stretch himself along in motionless repose beneath the spreading boughs. "We have boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus," says the apostle; but forthwith he adds, "Having an High Priest over the House of God" (Hebrews 10:19, Hebrews 10:21). The Lord's Supper also, if it be rightly understood, cannot fail to fix our eye on the Person. No doubt it speaks of the death, and of the New Covenant ratified by that death, and so of pardon and holiness, and all other connected benefits. But who can overlook the Benefactor amid his benefits? Are we not led directly, at that holy ordinance, to His Person, inasmuch as union to Him is the truth most remarkably exhibited therein? Union to Him who gives us His blood to ratify the New Covenant, and who gives us Himself as the food of our souls, is surely the very essence of the Lord's Supper. We show His "death," with our eye on "Him who died." We show His sufferings

of body and of soul, with our eye on the suffering one. We think of our sins requiring such a remedy - our wounds needing such balm - but still with our eye fixed on the Person whose stripes heal us. "Till He come" fixes yet again our eye on Himself, so that its gaze passes from the day of His agony onward to the day of His glory, and looks out for the "King in His beauty," as well as looks back on His marred form. The Holy Ghost delights in the Person of Christ. It was to honour not only His work, but Himself, that He descended on the day of His baptism. It is not merely the work, but the doer of it, that He delights to honour. The expressions, "He will glorify Me" (John 16:14), and "He shall testify of Me" (John 15:26), do not, of course, exclude His work; they necessarily imply it; only they do not mean His work apart from Himself. The Holy Ghost will ever honour the setting forth. of the Person who has given glory to God in the highest, and is Himself God over all. We may expect Him to bless us most when we are rather dwelling on the benefits as so many proofs of the Benefactor’s heart, than stopping short at these benefits, seeking no more than how to make them our own. The hospital, with its ample accommodation, and its stores of medicine and nourishment, and its supply of all that the sick, however many, can require, with access free to all, at every hour of night or day, this is one thing - but how much better, when besides, we have the presence of the founder and Physician Himself, passing through every room - bending over every sick-bed - uttering words and beaming forth looks of sympathy. Would you commend the place, and forget the physician? And will the Holy Ghost commend the Saviour’s benefits, if thereby you are to be led to overlook Himself?

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Chapter 80

06.03. The Help Afforded by Christ's Person to a Soul Seeking to Know Sin ...

The Person of Christ

Andrew Bonar

Chapter 3. The help Afforded by Christ’s Person to a Soul Seeking to Know Sin and the Application of Salvation.

Many of the early fathers use the word "theology," in the sense of "A discoursing upon the Divinity of Christ," and they called the apostle John "the Divine," or the Theologue," because he speaks so fully of the Word made flesh. To these Fathers all knowledge of God seemed comprehended in knowing Him who reveals the Father. And following their principles, we maintain that all real knowledge of God’s salvation is to be attained by becoming acquainted with Him who is the Saviour sent of God. In the days of the Reformation, we find Fox, the martyrologist, telling Roman Catholics that, "as there is no gift of God given to man, no virtue, work, merit, nor anything else, that is part or cause of salvation, but only this gift of faith to believe in Christ Jesus" - so also "neither does faith, as it is only a bare quality or action in man’s mind, itself justify, unless it be directed to the body of Christ crucified as its object, of whom it receiveth all its virtue." *

* Oliver Cromwell, in his day, writes to General Fleetwood : - " Faith as an act yields not perfect peace, but only carries us to Him who is our perfect rest and peace." In all ages of the Church, to know "Whom we have believed" has been felt to be all-important. In whatever light we view the matter, its importance will appear.

1. It helps us to discover the malignity of sin.

Right views of sin have a tendency to lead us to right views of the Person of the Saviour. But the converse also is true; right views of the Saviour’s person lead to right views of sin.

Socinians and Arians have shallow views of sin. They do not see that it deserves never-ending woe and infinite fierceness of wrath; nor do they feel their conscience alarmed at the enormous depravity of nature, and at the fearfully aggravated sins against God which they daily commit. Hence they see not the need they have of a Divine Saviour - one able to bear infinite wrath for the innumerable sins of a multitude whom no man can number.*

* The Elect - those given to Christ by His Father from eternity - His sheep - are not few in number, but "many." God out of his mere good pleasure, looking on a world where all alike were already ruined, elected "many" to everlasting life. Isaiah 53:12, "He bare the sin of many." Matthew 20:28, "Ransom for many;" Matthew 26:28, "My blood shed for many." Romans 5:15, "Many shall be made righteous." Electing love has laid hold of an innumerable multitude, and drawn them out of the many waters, putting every sin of every one of them on the Almighty’s Fellow, the man Christ Jesus, and imparting to them the grace given them in Him before the world began. (1 Timothy 1:9)

They are conscious that if it required the personal interposition of a divine surety to remove it, the sin must be very great; that it must indeed be branded as hateful beyond conception, if, ere it be forgiven, the Lawgiver himself must die. From these men, therefore, we learn to judge thus ; - that if we would feel the enormity of sin aright, we must see it calling for no less a satisfaction than what could be given by God Incarnate. The Roman Catholic, whose eye turns oftener far to the Virgin Mary than to Mary's Son, has not surely felt the true nature of sin, the rigour of the law, or the terror of divine judgment. Hence, such men are content to seek pardon through a creature's merits, and think that the intercession of a multitude of such creatures may prevail for them. But did they see sin under the teaching of the Spirit they would trust their pardon to no one but the God-man, Christ Jesus. And in point of fact, when Romanists are awakened by the Holy Spirit to deep sense of sin, they forthwith begin to feel how insufficient, how unsatisfactory, how incomplete is any kind of peace that does not come from the Incarnate Son of God. They begin to see sin to be such an evil as only God can remedy. From these, therefore, let us learn to judge thus; - it is in Christ, the Son of God, substituted for the sinner, that we see the abyss of evil in our sin, and that we become aware that sin is so clamorous for wrath as to be silenced only by the interposed Person of the Son of God. But turn aside again; approach an infant newly born, drawing its first breath in this fallen world. There is sin in that soul, and small as the sin may seem when compared with that of sinners who have lived forty or seventy years, yet even the sin of that infant is such an evil as nothing can remedy but the blood of the Son of God. If the sin of that infant is to be forgiven, the Son of God must "pour out his soul unto death" in its behalf.

Set before you any one of your own acts of disobedience, selecting those which may, in your judgment, appear the smallest and slightest. Yet that act was sin; - such an act that, ere it can be forgiven and you received into favour, Godhead must be moved! God the Son must rise from His place on the Father's bosom and haste to your rescue. Less than this would be insufficient; less than this would be entirely useless. For the abyss is bottomless. No angel's strength could bear the burden of the wrath due to your one sin, while certainly no angel's love could endure the trial of interposing as your substitute. Sin is something that only God can deal with - a mysteriously tremendous evil.

These lessons are taught us when we fix our attention not on the mere blessing of forgiveness, but also on the Person who brings it. If we were to adopt another plan too commonly pursued, and merely speak of salvation as a work done and finished well - or as a door opened at which the vilest may come in - or as a free invitation to the chief of sinners - we might in that case miss altogether the clear light cast on sin by the Gospel. But on the other hand, connect all with the Person (and in this case with the divine nature of the Person) - show that here is the work of God in our nature, God occupying our law-room - that here is the door of access opened, but only in consequence of Almighty love shedding the blood of the Beloved Son, heaven's Isaac - that here is a free invitation to the vilest, but that it is thus free only because the Saviour who came was Creator of all creatures, and therefore able to fulfil all conditions, and pay the last mite - show all this, and forthwith the light of the cross is cast on sin, and you see it to be an infinite evil, an evil understood by God alone.*

* "Who can set forth the riches of His death, and the unfathomable abyss of His sufferings? The inexpressible evil of sin appears here more clearly than if we saw all the misery of the damned" (HOWELL HARRIS, Lett. 43).

Such is the heat of wrath against sin, that unless the "shadow" which interposed between me and that heat had been the broad, far-extending shadow of a "Great Rock," the air around me would have burnt as an oven still. Such is the burden of sin on my single person, that never could I have been lifted up as a "lively stone," and my weight borne by the foundation-stone, unless the foundation had been God the Son. Surely, then, it was a gaping wound that sin had made, when such balm alone could heal it. O my soul, thou wert sinking fast in the swelling stream, and none could beat back the might of the wave but God, God in thy nature. A whole Christ was needed by thee, and that Christ, God ! - "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37) 2. The application of Salvation. A sinner may see that there is none other to whom we can go but Jesus only, and yet he may not go. He may imagine difficulties, and magnify these into impossibilities. But it is remarkable how many of these difficulties and apparent impossibilities flow down at the presence of the Person of the Lord - the soul beholding a full Saviour in Him who is God and man in one person. Clement of Rome (" whose name is in the Book of Life," Php 4:3), writes to the Corinthians,* * In an Epistle still preserved and reckoned genuine.

"Brethren, in our thoughts of Jesus Christ we ought to conceive of Him as God, and the Judge of quick and dead. We ought not to cherish low thoughts of Him who is our Saviour; for if our thoughts of Him are low, we will hope for little at His hand." This truth admits of wide application. A soul very deeply convinced of sin, or indeed convinced of sin at all as an awful reality, will find no object fit for its necessities but the person of God-man, associated with all he did. It was thus with a minister who lies buried in Bunhill Fields, Mr. Bradford. He was for a time an Arian, but was awakened to feel that he must be born again, while writing a. sermon on the words of Christ to Nicodemus. He felt sin in its power; he saw his sins to be innumerable, as well as inexpressibly heinous. "And now," says he, "the first relief I felt was from the view that Jesus Christ was GOD. His deity I now saw as the ground of all my confidence." No wonder! for it is there we see how the atonement could be sufficiently precious to avail for sinners such as we; it is only there we see how the Holy One could find a sacrifice for us pleasing and acceptable, and admitting of the widest application.

But, in cases where there is a tacit assent to the doctrine of the Person of Jesus, there is often a real and practical overlooking of it. Often the deeply exercised soul looks at all else rather than the Living One Himself - thinking of his ways, purposes, work, but shutting its eyes on Himself. Now, let that soul be led for a time to deal with the Person, and the effect will be marvellous, if the Holy Spirit enable him to see who this Person is.

"How am I to cross that mountain ?" says an anxious soul, pointing to the doctrine of electing love. "How am I to find myself among the number of the elect?" "And," says another, "if you cannot assure me that the blood of Christ was intended as much for me as for Peter or Paul, Mary Magdalene or Mary of Bethany, how can I rest on it?" Another, yet more bold, comes forward and declares that "if Christ did not die alike for all men, and bear all sinners alike on His heart when He died, then there is no truth sufficient for a sinner seeking salvation to rest upon."

Now, to all those travellers who would willingly (if they could) find out that there is no such mountain as electing love, because they fancy it is an insuperable one, we say at once, the Person of the Lord Jesus stands in front of that glorious mountain whose top touches heaven; and you have to do with His Person ere you set a foot on that mountain. Our warrant for believing in Christ

is simply this, that He cries to the children of men, "To you, O men, I call." And he bids them ALL come in the first place to HIMSELF. Come and see this Person. (Proverbs 8:2) "If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink" (John 7:37). "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden" (Matthew 11:28) - ye that are toiling up that mountain with a load on your souls that almost crushes you at every step.

All your difficulties about election are thus set aside for the time - set aside until you have found Christ Himself, "who will show you plainly of the Father" in due time. All your difficulties about election are in this manner transferred to Christ Himself, who it is (and not we) that must reconcile the universal call with His special love to His elect. Well, be content to leave the difficulty with Jesus; and meanwhile deal with a personal Saviour, not with words, and doctrines, and propositions. Say, if you will, “Perhaps I am not elected, and if so it will be in vain for me to expect a place among His redeemed “ - say this, if you will, but only go and see. Go to the Person, of the Christ, and throw thyself at His feet.

Now, you do throw yourself at Christ’s feet, when, letting alone for the time all these thoughts of election and the inquiry whether you are or are not in the Book of Life, you allow your soul to think of Christ Himself. Will Christ Himself refuse a coming sinner? He cannot; for it is written, “Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). He will not say that He has not a price sufficient to pay for you. He will not say that the foundation is not broad enough for you to build on. He will not say that he has not love sufficient to lead Him to have compassion on you. You may not be able to make out from some of Christ’s words whether or not there be room for you; but try Christ’s heart - appeal to Him as one “who receiveth sinners “ - and tell Him that such a sinner are you.

Never forget the Syrophenician mother’s dealing with the Lord. It is a case recorded as if on very purpose for such a state of soul as yours. This woman came, full of desire and hope, but was told, “I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Was not this confronting her at once with the darkest shadow of the highest height of the mountain of Election? It seemed to say, “There is no place for you.” It did not leave her an opening (as there is in your case) to say, “Possibly I am in the number “ - it seemed to deny that she was thought of at all. If ever there was a trying case it was here. But how did this woman act? She did not try to prove, as some do in our day, that there was not, and could not be, such a thing as special electing love - but she left that difficulty to be solved by the Lord Himself, and threw herself upon the Person of Jesus. She renewed her appeal to Himself “Lord, help me.” “Truth, Lord, but the dogs (and such am I) under the table eat of the crumbs.” She probed His heart; she believed there were depths of mercies there; and she found she was right! She has left us a proof that when a sinner repairs to the Person of the living Saviour, that sinner is at once met by Him; and the gracious colloquy begins - ”Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord” (Isaiah 1:18); and it will end with nothing less than absolution, “Though your sins have been as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they have been red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Believest thou this? In believing this, thy soul shall find acceptance with God; and in the same hour, thy Lord will let thee know that He had thee in His heart from eternity. It is thus that an anxious soul’s stumbling on the difficulty of election may become a real advantage. It guides the soul away from a thing to a person. His first question now is not, What does Christ think of me? But, What am I to think of Christ? The traveller is confronted by the frowning mountain-height, and this leads him at once to discover, ere he climbs

even one height, the Person to whose dwelling he imagined he must come by long and laborious efforts. Boldly encounter the question, “Am I one of God’s elect? Am I one given to Christ by the Father from all eternity?” It will lead you directly to the Person of Jesus, as the only mode of reaching a true and sure solution. It will send you not to the Book of Life, but to the Lamb who writes it; and in asking about Him, you find that He has singular love to sinners, and that “He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him” (Hebrews 7:25).*

* It is thus in general that little children rest on Christ. With little theology, they know and feel that this is He who died for sinners. Their faith is like that of Old Testament saints; it is the sheep resting on the shepherd’s shoulders, with little knowledge of how he saves them. Is this not enough?

We may here take occasion to observe that a fresh view of His Person, especially in its human aspect, seems, from the Gospels, to be the Lord’s way of removing the after fears of His own. We find that the Lord when on earth used to remove fear by revealing Himself. On that memorable night of storm, when wind and waves tossed the vessel, and darkness had spread its thickest veil over moon and stars, Jesus walked on the waters and approached them. The thought that it was “a Spirit” (Matthew 14:26), or angelic messenger (it might be some one of the “ ministering spirits “), was no consolation to men who at that hour were ready to perish, and who felt worthy to perish. They saw nothing in an angel’s presence but what might remind them, by contrast, of their own unholiness; and they knew nothing of the depth of an angel’s compassion. But no sooner did Jesus speak, “IT IS I,” than there was a calm in their souls, such as the after-calm on the surface of the lake was but an emblem of: “It is I!” I am here! was all He said. But they knew His heart as well as hand. They knew His love to them, unworthy as they were. They knew His sinner-love - His love to men. And why should we not have this same remedy for our anxieties? The living Jesus - Jesus full of human sympathies and divine glories!

It was so again after the Resurrection. In Luke 24:36-47, we read of the scene. The disciples had lately sinned, and were not as yet altogether at rest. When, therefore, one enters the Upper Room who seemed to be from the other side of the Veil, they are sore afraid - as if tidings from that side must be evil tidings to them, and as if a holy angel, even a holy ministering “spirit,” must have been sent on some errand of reproof or judgment. But it was the Lord! and He lifted up His voice with the salutation, “Peace” - man’s salutation taken up by the God-man’s lips into which grace is poured. And then He drew all their attention to His Person, as not that of an angel, but of one who had “flesh and bones - that is, who had man’s nature. He showed them “hands and feet; “ - the hands that had so often touched the sick to heal them, and been laid on themselves to bless them ; - the feet that for them had been weary on the highways of Judea and Galilee, and had got no rest till they touched the cold stone of Joseph’s sepulchre. “Why are ye troubled?” said He, as if to recall the night of the last supper: “Let not your hearts be troubled” (John 14:1-26). “And why do thoughts arise in your minds ? “ - thoughts or disputings as to who this was. He hastened yet farther to show them His true humanity - that He was the God-man, the Lord of glory, who put on their very nature; for He asked for fish and honey-comb, and did eat with them as a guest at their board. No wonder that (John 14:24) they were so full of joy at the very possibility of His very self being there, so full that they could scarcely allow themselves to believe it. But they show us in what manner immediate calm is to be found; and true rest from anxiety; they show us the real removal of questionings and troubles, and the simple means of being filled with joy unspeakable.

The streams from Lebanon furnish it all! The Person of the God-man presents thoughts, and declares truths, and reveals feelings towards us, such as may well cause a soul to cry, “All my springs are in thee!” He did not come saying, “Peter, I love thee;” “Bartholomew, I love thee,” “And I love thee, Thaddeus,” “And thee, Philip “ - but He took a way which made all of them feel more than even if He had done and said this very thing, He presented among them Himself in His humanity! Lo! (as if he had said) Lo! I am among you, the Incarnate God, whose love has led me to be man’s Redeemer. Handle me and see! Draw out of this well - wherein is love not only to you, Peter, and to you, Bartholomew, and to you, Thaddeus, and to you, Philip - but to “a great multitude whom no man can number,” out of every kindred, and tongue, and people. Draw from this Well and thirst no more.

"He that hath ears to hear let him hear." To have rejected the Saviour - to have slighted Him - to have refused to make Him welcome, on the pretext of imagined difficulties, will be as the “worm that never dies” to your soul! And further we say, to have received less than the Person of Him who died and rose again - to have been satisfied with mere propositions and statements, with mere doctrines and truths, instead of embracing in your heart the very Person to whom all these referred will be to you the “worm that never dies” - a subject of endless regret in eternity, when regret is unavailing. You are like a man laying himself to repose on the bosom of a cloud, on the white down of the ocean’s foam. Oh, the misery of the soul that is content with a shadow instead of substance ! - content with a vague belief that there was a sort of general love and mercy to all, and a kind of general vindication of righteousness and moral govern- ment, instead of taking the full, ample soul-filling and conscience-filling atonement, - salvation. for him by means of such a personal substitute as the Lord Jesus, the Son of the Highest !

What is “Wrath to come,” if, to avert it from sinners, the Lord Jehovah rose from His throne! But on the other hand, where is the possibility of perishing if a sinner accept Him who has come ? Yonder is the baring of. the Almighty’s bosom, proclaiming, “Yet there is room.” Yonder is an ocean-depth of love, which even Manasseh has not yet fathomed - yonder is an atmosphere of love to the height of which even Paul has never soared! And (herein indeed is love!) we may taste it, each for ourselves! It is the bosom on which even we may for ever rest.

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Chapter 81

06.04. How Looking to the Person of Christ Tends to Promote the Peace that Passes Understanding

The Person of Christ

Andrew Bonar

Chapter 4.

How looking to the Person of Christ tends to Promote the Peace that Passes Understanding. No one could be supposed to have seen the Alps, if he tells you that all he saw was some rocky ridges of hills which his eye felt no strain in looking to. The Alps are not such hills; they tower to the clouds. Equally true it is that no one can be considered as having really seen sin, who never saw it to be very great; or to have got real rest to his soul, who has not seen the Saviour to be very great. Indeed, very great salvation is needed in order to give any true peace to a soul truly awakened; such salvation as is discovered when the soul discovers the Person of the Saviour. Then it sings, "Jah Jehovah is my strength and song, and has become my salvation" (Isaiah 12:2). "In Jah Jehovah*

*These are the only passages where that particular combination occurs, "Jah-Jehovah;" as if to gather up the fulness of Godhead-existence in one clause, when singing of Him who is our salvation.

He from whom every drop of being came is mine! is the Rock of ages" (Isaiah 26:4).

Even one sin makes peace flee from the soul, as we see in the case of Adam and Eve. Even one sin fills the soul with suspicions of God and suggestions of fear. Of course, then, the conscience of every sinner abounds in materials for fear before God. Achan may be secure for a time, while his wedge of gold and his Babylonish garment remain hid in the tent; but let a hurricane from the howling wilderness shake the cords and canvas of his tent, threatening to blow aside the covering of his theft, and then he is full of alarm! Now, to the conscience of the sinner, every sin is like Achan’s theft. There may be a present calm in the air, but who can promise that there shall not arise a stormy wind? a hurricane threatening to tear up the stakes of his earthly tabernacle? Who can engage that every sin shall not be laid bare? Who can give security that the sinner shall not in the twinkling of an eye be sisted at the bar of the Holy One? It is a small matter to say that at present all is at rest within. A city may be wrapt in slumber, and under the calm moon may seem as quiet as a cemetery; and yet the first beams of the morning sun may awake sleeping rebels, and witness the burst of revolutionary frenzy.

Every sin is secretly uttering to the man God’s sentence of death; insinuating uneasy forebodings regarding coming wrath. Every sin mutters to the sinner something more or less distinct about having wronged God, and about God being too holy and just to let it slip from remembrance. And when the quickening Spirit is at work in the conscience, every sin cries loudly to the Lord for vengeance against him in whose heart it has its abode. For such a state of soul only one thing can

avail - namely the discovery which the Spirit makes to the man in conversion, the discovery of Christ's full sacrifice for sin. Therein may be seen a propitiation as full and efficacious as conscience craves, because it was wrought out by Him who is God-man. Therein may be seen the whole Person of the Saviour presented to the soul as the object to be embraced, and that person associated with the merit of all He has done and suffered. Nay more; every act and suffering of that glorious Person confronts the case of every sinner. Not only does he remedy the case of every individual sinner of all that "multitude which no man can number," but besides He meets every individual sin, and applies out-poured life to each stain, to blot it out. This is exactly what was needed. If I see Him who is the atonement to be God-man, then I see an offering so vast, and so extensive in its applications, that every crevice of the conscience must be reached.

He is our peace, not by His death only, but by His life of obedience also, imputed to us. The more, therefore, we go into details with His Person (the Person of Him whose every act and agony has an infinite capability of application because of His being the God-man), then the more shall we see good reason why our peace through Him should be peace "passing understanding" (Php 4:7). Let us exhibit some details of the kind we refer to - viz., His personal acts and sufferings meeting my personal disobedience and my personal desert of wrath.*

* "His humiliation expiates our pride; His perfect love atones for our ingratitude; His exquisite tenderness pleads for our insensibility" (JOHN NEWTON, Sermon I.).

I confess the sin of my nature, my original sin; "Behold! I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalms 51:5). But I see in Christ one who, while He was "that Holy One," was born to be holiness to others (Luke 1:25). His dying was fully sufficient to remove the guilt of my conception, and my connection with Adam; while His doing was holy from the womb. Behold! then, here am I in my substitute! My infancy without iniquity, nay, with actual purity, in the eye of Him who is well pleased with my Substitute.

I confess the sin of my childhood. My childhood and youth were vanity. But I find in Christ, God-man and my Substitute, deliverance from all this guilt. "The child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him" (Luke 2:40). I get all the positive merit of this childhood of my surety, full as it was of holy wisdom, and free from every taint of folly and thoughtlessness; and along with this I get the atoning merit of His death. And thus I present to God both satisfaction for the trespasses I have done in my childhood, and also obedience equivalent in full to what the law had right even then to expect or claim from me.

I confess more particularly the sin of my thoughts, "Every imagination of the thoughts of my heart has been only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). But I discover Him who not only by death perfected the atonement for me, but who also obeyed my obedience in the thoughts of the heart, saying, "Thy law is within my heart" (in midst of my bowels) (Psalms 40:8).

I confess the sin of my words, my idle words, my evil words. For it is written (Matthew 12:36), "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." But I find in this great atonement the penalty paid for my every idle word. I find, at the same time, the rendering of the obedience due by me, inasmuch as his mouth was a well of life, "grace was poured into his lips" (Psalms 45:2), and men never heard him utter aught but words of holiness.

I confess the sin of my duties; for example, the sin of my careless worship in the sanctuary. But I find my glorious Substitute worshipping for me in the synagogue. (Luke 4:16), "He came to Nazareth, and as His custom was He went into the synagogue." I find Him vindicating the honour of His Father in the temple-service. (John 2:17), "Make not My Father's house an house of merchandise. And His disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." His songs of praise, His deep attention to the written Word there read, His joining in the public prayers, all this He puts to my account, as if I had done it acceptably and done so always, - while in the same moment, by His shed blood, He blots out every accusation against me for omissions and guilty acts.

I confess my prayerlessness in secret. It has grieved the Lord to the heart. But I find my Surety "rising a great while before day, and departing to a solitary place to pray" (Mark 1:35); or, "continuing all night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12). This He will impute to me, as if I had so prayed every day and night; at the same time plunging my sins of omission into the depths of the sea.

I confess and deplore heart-sins of various kinds. I lament instability of soul; my goodness is like the early dew. But He was "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," both God-ward and man-ward (Hebrews 13:8). I feel hardness of heart. But He imputes to me His own tenderness, and reckons to my account His own yearnings of soul for the glory of His Father. I am stubborn; but He can say, "The Lord God opened mine ear, and, I was not rebellious, neither turned away backwards" (Isaiah 1:5). In me is guile; but "in His mouth was no guile found" (1 Peter 2:22). And thus there is ready not only the warp of satisfaction for transgression, but also the woof of rendered obedience.

Let me still go on a little in this application of my Lord's active and passive righteousness. Do I feel my soul in anguish, because of indulging ambitious projects, seeking to be somewhat? I find Him "not seeking His own glory" (John 8:50): and this fold of His robe He will cast over me, while by His blood He washes me from all my self-seeking.

I have pleased myself. But of Him it is testified, "He pleased not Himself" (Romans 14:2). I have sought my own will. But He could declare before the Father and to men, "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30). And thus has He fully given the very form of obedience that I have omitted to render. He gave what I withheld; and He will give it for me, at the same time that my guilt in withholding it is hidden in His blood.

I have been worldly. I have loved "the world and the things that are in the world" (1 John 2:15); not only the objects it presents, but the very place itself, in preference to place and things wherein the direct presence of God might be enjoyed. But He did not. "He was not of the world" (John 17:14). He never had any of its treasure; it is doubtful if He ever possessed or handled any of its money; we are sure He had nowhere to lay His head.. The world hated Him, "because He testified that the works thereof were evil" (John 7:7). And all this He has at hand to impute to me, while He washes me from guilt.

I have been often double-minded. His eye was always single. "I have glorified Thee" (John 17:4) was always true of Him. I have been inconsistent; but even Satan could find "nothing in Him" (John 16:30). And He could challenge His foes, "which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John 8:46). My pride and haughtiness have need of One who was "meek and lowly." And such I find in Him; and I

find Him calling me to come to Him as such, and use Him (Matthew 11:29).

If I have backslidden, yet my Surety's course was truly like "the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18). "He increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52). Instead of lukewarmness ever on any occasion appearing in Him , such was His zeal for men's salvation that at one time friends stood by and said, "He is beside Himself" (Mark 3:21); and at another, His disciples were irresistibly led back to the words of the Psalmist, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up" (John 2:17). Now, all this active righteousness in Him is for my use. He will throw over me this other fold of His robe, as well as apply His infinitely precious death, - and thus no one shall ever be able to accuse me of backsliding, God accepting my Surety's work for me.

I have grieved the Spirit. But oh, how Christ honoured Him! Such blessed things He said of Him! "The Comforter," "the Spirit of truth," "the Holy Spirit," were names which He applied to Him; and Himself had been led by Him in delighted acquiescence. "Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness" (Luke 4:1). He has something here to present instead of my provocations; and what He has, He will use for me. Only let me know the treasures hid in His Person, and my consolation must abound.

I have been unthankful; but oh! how my Surety abounded in thanksgivings, - thanksgivings for food, - thanksgivings for the Gospel revealed to babes, - thanksgivings for the communion table, because it proclaimed His dying for us. Herein I find obedience to a law I broke, the law of gratitude - while in the sacrifice of Calvary I find expiation for my guilty ingratitude.

I think upon my unconcern for souls. And I find the remedy for that iniquity in Him whose heart burned "to seek and save that which was lost," and who plunged into the sea of wrath in order to redeem - for every step in His atonement has in it something of obedience as well as satisfaction.

Oh, inconceivable fulness for us in Him! whatever be the special sin which our conscience at any moment is feeling. Only let us ever keep Christ Himself in view, Christ clothed to the foot in that garment of active and passive righteousness.

It is thus we get the sea, with all its multitudinous waves*

* There is a wave of it for ministerial failures; for He never failed, but could appeal to His Father, "I have declared thy faithfulness, and thy salvation" (Psalms 51:9-10). His Shepherd's heart and work cover over ours. And so let a teacher repair to Him for the hiding of sins in teaching. "In the day-time He was teaching in the temple" (Luke 21:37). "I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple" (John 18:20).

(Isaiah 48:18, "righteousness like the waves of the sea"), to flow up every creek and sweep round every bay. His Person being such, His work completely fits into the soul's necessities. And all this is so great, that not only does it affect us negatively, - not only does this full view of Christ remove every tremor from the soul, - it works besides into the heart a positive bestowal of bliss.

It is as sometimes in nature when every breath of wind is so lulled asleep that not a leaf moves on the bough of any tree; the sun is shedding his parting ray on the still foliage; and the sea rests as if it had become a pavement of crystal. This is peace in nature. Your heart feels, amid such a scene, not only the absence of whatever might create alarm or disquiet, but the presence also of some

elements of positive enjoyment, as if there were an infusion of bliss in the scene. Now, infinitely more is this the case in the kingdom of grace. The presence of Christ in the heart (the Spirit there testifying of Christ) lulls fear to sleep; and while He makes disquiet almost an impossibility, never fails to bring in positive delight and bliss. There is something in it to "keep the heart and mind" (garrison, and so preserve secure) (Php 4:7). And what is this positive element but the real outbreathing of direct friendship and love for Him whose heart we now know? He removes the barriers out of the way and out of sight, in order to bring in Himself with all His love, - Himself rich in all affections and bowels of mercy. And is not this the true "healing" of the "hurt"? Was not the "hurt," our separation from the Holy One, caused by sin? Is not this the "healing," then, our return to fellowship with Him?

It is worth while asking, in every case of apparent peace, whether or not this positive element exists. Is there not only the absence of dread and a calmness in looking towards the Holy One, but, in addition to this, is there direct enjoyment of Him who gives the peace? The work of Christ, if seen apart from His Person, may give freedom from dread of wrath, but it can scarcely impart that positive delight in His restored friendship, which alone "keepeth the heart and mind."

"HE is our Peace," says Paul, in Ephesians 2:14. And when, in Php 4:7 he spoke of His peace keeping the heart and mind (" the thoughts"- in the original), he said it was "by Christ Jesus." Was not Paul here directed by the Spirit to insert this clause in order to fix our eye on the Person who is our peace - the true "Jehovah-shalom?" (Judges 6:24). And is not the reason of this to be found in the fact that in proportion as we see the Person, our soul’s peace spreads and deepens? Certainly, all who have tried it find this to be the case. The more they know of Him, the more complete is their souls’ rest. It is shallow peace (if it be indeed the "peace of God" at all), when the Person of the Peacemaker is not directly realised. And now, seeing we have such advantages above Old Testament saints, who saw the Person so dimly, are there not duties and responsibilities resulting? "The darkness is past and the true light now shineth" (1 John 2:8). Therefore (says John) there is for you "A new commandment." He seems to mean that the increase of light has given force to every demand for obedience; and especially that the appearing of this Light, the Person Jesus, has brought with it peculiar motives to obedience. May we not say that if we get such peace in Jesus Christ, and have Himself to calm our souls, the Lord may well expect at our hands a higher style of obedience than in former days?

Peace has its responsibilities - such peace through such a Redeemer, has no common responsibilities. We are freed from burdens in order to work for God - we are fully justified in order to be the more fully sanctified. Carry this kind of peace with you everywhere, and you cannot fail ever. where to show that you are with Jesus; for it is Himself realised that gives it. Your claim to real peace implies your seeing Christ Himself, and enjoying His fellowship. If so, then you may well be expected to show likeness to Jesus; for "he that walketh with the wise men shall be wise ‘ (Proverbs 13:20). Your peace will be characterised by purity, as all ever is that comes from God (James 3:17), and as all must be that is the direct effect of an eye fixed on "God manifest in the flesh." Your peace "in Jesus Christ" will keep you daily at His side, engaged in His work, guided by His look, satisfied with His smile, living to do His will. Who could have his eye on that Saviour continually, and there see "peace in heaven" toward himself, and yet at the same time turn his feet into the by-paths of unholiness? Were your peace gotten or maintained by looking at an act of your own - viz., your having once believed, or having done the thing called believing, then possibly you

might be at peace, and yet after all not walk with God. But in as much as true Scriptural peace is gotten and maintained by the sinner’s eye resting at the moment on the Person of Him who is our peace - on the person of Jehovah-shalom*

* Judges 6:24, "Jehovah is peace;" like 1 John 4:8, "God is Love." It is at the altar of sacrifice that "Jehovah is peace."

- it is not possible to be at peace and yet at the same time willingly wander from fellowship with the Holy One. Christ, our Peace-maker, walks among us wherever is to be found anything "true, or honest, or just, or lovely, or of good report " - wherever is to be seen "any virtue or any praise" (Php 4:8). And he who has peace by having his eye on Christ cannot enjoy this peace without being led at the same moment to these walks of Christ. Hence it is that Paul writes to the Philippian Church - to Lydia, and the Jailor, and Euodias, and Syntyche, and Clement - that "the God of peace would be with them" while they pursued these objects (Php 4:8-9). If they were found at any time wandering from these holy paths, it would be a sufficient sign to them (as it will be to us also), that they had for the time taken off their eyes from Him who was their peace - and so, ere they were aware, had lost the enjoyment of that deep, profound peace, which "keepeth the heart and mind."

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Chapter 82

06.05. How Looking to the Person Tends to Advance Holiness in the Soul

The Person of Christ

Andrew Bonar

Chapter 5.

How looking to the Person tends to Advance Holiness in the Soul.

"SANCTIFY them by the truth" was our Lord’s prayer; but it is truth in connection with Himself. For, separate from Him, doctrines "have no living power, but are as waters separated from the fountain; they dry up, or become a noisome puddle, or as a beam interrupted from its continuity with the sun is immediately deprived of light." (Owen on Person of Christ.)

There is an expressive type in the old economy that bears on this subject. The cherubim (emblems of the redeemed) stood upon the mercy-seat or lid of the Ark - that lid, or mercy-seat, on which the blood was seventimes sprinkled every atonement day. In this manner is set forth the soul’s resting on the work of Christ; for here is His shed blood, and the feet of the cherubim touch that blood. But, at the same time, notice that they stood not on the blood alone, but on the mercy-seat - a part of that Ark which altogether was typical of Christ Himself, the depositary or treasure-chest of all our blessings. Thus they exhibited rest on the Person as well as on the work of Christ. Again; the cherubim looked down upon the blood that lay on the mercy-seat; but their look was not less fully directed towards the mercy-seat itself, and the Ark too. Once more; these symbolic figures of the redeemed spread out their wings over the blood, but not over that alone, but at least as fully over the mercy-seat and Ark - a significant action, expressive of their regarding it as worthy of care - nay, as being to them what to the mother-bird her brood is in the nest. The wings were spread forth on either side, as if purposely to show that the whole of the Ark was their care, the object of their solicitude and their delight.

Perhaps there was still more signified in their connection with that Ark. They not only stood upon it, and leant their whole weight on it, but they were also joined to it. For they formed one piece with the mercy-seat, which was the upper part of the Ark, and which was all of gold. Not content with representing them as ever gazing on this object, the Lord set forth their union to Himself who is the mercy-seat - union to Him in His glorified state (for they and it were of gold), sharing in all the fruits of His finished work and begun glory.

Union to Christ’s Person is a fact in the case of every believer, and ought therefore to be a constant subject of meditation to every believer. Now, this union realised leads to a realising of the Person. Hence, in the Lord’s Supper, it is always important for the communicant to ask, with Paul, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? (1 Corinthians 10:16). That ordinance, so rich in blessing and in blessed suggestions, is fitted always to bring us back to a

fresh and present realising of the Person of Jesus, by bringing us to a remembrance of our union to that Person. Can we think of union to Him, and not go on to ask, Who is this to whom I am united? Who is this that is my husband? Who is this that is far more mine than the husband is the wife's? What is His heart? What is His hand of might? Where are His possessions? Where are the proofs of His love? Are His glories bursting on my view? The great truth, which the Ark in the Old Testament, and the Lord's Supper in the New, is so well fitted to keep before us, has been the object of endeavour and pursuit (if not always of attainment) to all believers who have been found growing in holiness. In the latter days of the life of Howell Harris, of Wales, the intent gaze of his soul on the Person of Jesus is as remarkable, as was his intent look to the terrors of Sinai in earlier days. He writes to a friend (Let. 43), "One view of Him, in His eternal Godhead, and so of the infinity of His Person, love, obedience, and suffering, is worth millions of worlds." In another (Let. 52), "How is it with all you? Doth the veil wear off, and doth the glory of a crucified Saviour appear brighter and brighter? Oh, my brother, that Man is indeed the eternal God. What views doth He give vile me of Himself! He shines brightly like the sun at noon! Oh, what heart of stone would not melt to see the eternal God lying in a manger, sweating and tired, wearing His thorny crown, not opening His mouth, because He bare our sin and shame? Go on, my dear brother, and be bold in the great mystery of God become man."

Undoubtedly it mellows and matures the character of saints to be much occupied with their Lord's Person; but as undoubtedly it quickens their sense of obligation, and keeps alive love and gratitude, to be thus ever in contact with a personal Saviour. Ideas, however noble, may leave our souls comparatively dry, and they will always leave us infinitely less affected in our conscience, than when we meet our God in His personality.*

* Trench, in one of his Hulsean Lectures, puts the case thus: "Oh, how great the difference between submitting ourselves to a complex of rules, and casting ourselves upon a beating heart" (P. 122).

Now, while all believers do in some measure deal with a personal Christ, yet all do not seek to extend their experience of it; although the more this is done, the more fervent, and mild, and calm will all holiness be in their souls; for then they take it fresh from the spring, and that spring is the calm, deep soul of Jesus. There will be a difference in the tone of, their life, and the fulness of their conformity to the image of their Lord, in proportion as their eye rests more or less frequently on His Person. Indeed, so much is this the case, that we are inclined to think that Peter referred very specially to this style of experience, when he was inspired to write, "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour ~ Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

Many saints seem to be little aware how much of grace there is in the knowledge of the Person of Jesus. It would singularly benefit some of these, who have lived much on what they know about Jesus, to try for a week the more blessed and fruitful way of dealing directly with Himself. There are treasures in the Person of Him whose doctrines they believe, if only they could use them. A great philosopher says, on another subject, what we may accommodate to this : - " A man may believe in the work and Person of Christ for twenty years, and only in the twenty-first - in some great moment - is he astonished at the rich substance of His belief - the rich warmth of this naphthaspring." He adds to his ideas a person, and exchanges knowledge about a truth for knowledge of Him that is true - yes, exchanges opinions for a deep joy in the Living One, a joy

which nothing earthly gave nor can destroy. By this looking to the Person, the believer's holiness, or growth in grace, is advanced in a threefold way. For this looking to the Person leads - 1. To communion; 2. To a realising of His life for us; 3. To imitation ; - all which conform the soul to His likeness.

1. Communion with Him is one result, and a sanctifying result. When we dwell on the Saviour's Person, we are in His company. Faith places us by His side, and shows us His glory, until what we see makes our heart burn within us. We are virtually put in the position of disciples walking by His side, witnessing His excellences, basking in the radiance of grace and truth from His countenance, hearing His words. Now, this contemplation of Him is transforming in its effects; "Beholding the glory of the Lord, we are changed: into the same image" (2 Corinthians 3:18) This is the plan which the Holy Spirit takes in conforming us to Christ's image. In this way He daguerreotypes on our prepared hearts the likeness of Him whom we look to. This communion was carried on very constantly by Samuel Rutherford while in exile, hour after hour. The day seemed short while so engaged; and thus it was he exhorted a friend: "I urge upon you a nearer communion with Christ, and a growing communion. There are curtains to be drawn by in Christ that we never saw, and new foldings of love in Him. I despair that ever I shall win to the far end of that love; there are so many plies in it. Therefore, dig deep - and set by as much time in the day for Him as you can - He will be won by labour." But is it not intimated to us, by there being such a book as "the Song of Songs," that the Lord desires far more of our communion with Him than we generally relish? Was not that Song of Songs written to teach us this dealing with Himself? It was given to the Church in Old Testament days, when His Person as yet was dimly seen; for so great was His desire for this personal converse with us, He would teach it even then. How much more now should it be our occupation, when we see the Bridegroom, and know Him as revealed by Himself. Is there much of that tender love in the present day? Are there many of His own who are saying to Him, "Let me kiss Him with the kisses of His love" (Song of Solomon 1:1) - using that figure for want of any other adequate terms? Are many telling Him , "I am sick of love. If ye find my beloved, tell Him that I am sick of love ?" (Song of Solomon 1:8). Have we at all adequately realised our privilege of holding "fellowship" with Him, as a man speaketh to His friend? "Truly," said John, "our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3). There was here personal intercourse, the soul of disciples with the soul of the master. There was no doubt, in spirit, all the reality of the converse exhibited in the Song of Songs, and realised by each disciple in the Upper Room.

2. Thus living on the Son of God personally leads us to realise His life for us. By His life for us is meant His manner of spending for us the three-and-thirty years He lived on earth, as well as His continually using for us "the power of his endless life," now in heaven. All that is associated with that Person, we cannot but seek to call to mind. Every notice of His former walk on earth we eagerly read, that we may thereby know His heart, He being "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

All the records of His sympathy with us in our misery, every trait of His tender pity, whatever indicates His thoughts, we peruse with untiring fondness - returning to the meditation again and again with as engrossing an interest as at first. On this account the four gospels possess indescribable attractions; for there it is we glean the finest wheat - glimpses of His glory and grace, human and divine. What He did, what He said, what He suffered, what He felt, what He thought; how He was silent, how He spoke; His journeyings, His places of rest; the words He used in

healing, the look, the prayer, the touch, the command, the call - all have an engrossing interest, because God-man is there. And then, not less, the outgushings of grace and truth, in the outpouring of His soul unto death, and in the resurrection-victory, and in the discoveries of the same heart toward us when His exaltation was begun, and His robe of righteousness had been waved with acceptance before the Father. But still more. We follow Him as "He feeds among the lilies." We try to feel His heart beating for us in heaven; and just as one walking with Aaron, the High Priest, could not but see the breast-plate with its names, so we cannot fail to see that this Jesus bears the names of His own on His heart. We find it written, "We shall be saved by His life" (Romans 5:10). We go up to Him, and find His love as intense, and His merit as fresh, as when He rose from the tomb. We realise Him as "every moment watering His vine " - interceding and obtaining daily grace for us. His life above is a life of love, no less than was His life below. Behold, how He thinks upon us night and day! Not content with putting into our hand the cup of blessing on the day of our conversion He takes care to keep it in our possession and to keep us from spilling its new wine. He remembers still how he hid us in the cleft on that day when we flew as trembling doves to the rock; and he keeps us as safely hid as ever. Not only did He once blot out our sins, but he is employed in seeing that the writing never reappear. He once put on us a robe of righteousness: he every hour continues to keep it on us, in spite of blasts from earth and hell. He once plunged all our sins in the depth of the sea. He still appears for us in the presence of God, keeping the deep tide that buries these sins from ever ebbing. He once acquitted us and gained us honour far greater than was gained by Mordecai before Ahasuerus: He is every day still engaged in preventing us ever falling into disgrace. In this manner we feel our acceptance and the communication of blessing to us fresh each day, through Him who is our life; and so nothing in our religion grows old, and none of our reasons for close dependence on Him are past and out of date; nay, our every-day life is in a manner a daily repetition of the day of our first conversion. By this view a daily impulse is given to our walk with God. Is not this what we need for continual progress? And is not this the Spirit’s manner of watering the roots of the plants of grace? And at the same time, as a man much in Aaron’s company would see on His person and garments the anointing oil, so in our interceding Lord we see the Holy Spirit dwelling without measure. We see Him with the "seven Spirits of God," and this all for us. Our eye, resting on the Person of Jesus, discovers therein a reservoir of all holiness for our souls, inasmuch as he has the Spirit without measure. And so we learn to take from Him "that other Comforter," who delights to glorify the Saviour, and who is Himself infinite love and loveliness. What a sight for a soul like ours! "The Spirit of wisdom and revelation," dwelling in Him whom we long to know more and more. We read, in a manner, on His vesture and on His thigh, "Thou hast received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also!" (Psalms 68:18).

3. But further, there is Imitation - imitation of Him we look upon. Long ago Origen (Neander’s Ch.Hist., vol ii.p.283) wrote : - " Faith brings with it a spiritual communion with Him in whom one believes; and hence a kindred disposition of mind which will manifest itself in works - the object of faith being taken up into the inner life." We do not look only on His wounds, but also on His holy steps; and we not only look, but by the sure leading of that Spirit who shows us what we see, we at the same moment seek to imitate. For the inmost soul is moved.*

* The soul whose sight all-quickening grace renews

Takes the resemblance of the good she views;

As diamonds stript of their opaque disguise

Reflect the noonday glory of the skies (C0WPER).

Looking much to Jesus in His person, we instinctively (so to speak) copy what we see. Indeed, real holiness is simply the "Imitation of Christ," after He has washed us, and in the depth of His atoning grace left us without guilt. It is grateful imitation, not the imitation of those who are working for life. Much in the presence of our Benefactor who so loved us, we would fain resemble him in our character and state of mind, and so we seek to copy what is imitable in His ways, and in all He manifested of Himself while redeeming us. We are led to desire (as Paul recommends in Php 2:5) to be filled with the "mind that was in Christ," that mind which shone out so attractively as He bore the cross and drank the cup to the dregs - for the Apostle Peter (2 Peter 2:22-24) exhorts us to observe even His example while hanging on the cross as containing some matter for imitation, some footsteps for us to walk in. In this same way true and steady looking to Christ's Person would, by the Spirit's teaching, lead us into the experience of that "charity" which is described in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. It is said to have these fourteen qualities, each one of which is best learned by beholding it in Christ, the original.

1. "Charity suffereth long." Where was this love illustrated if not in our Lord when He refused to bring down fire on the rejecters of His grace - stretched out His hands all day to rebels - bore mockery, blasphemy, wrong, the scourge, the crown of thorns, the reed, the blindfolding napkin, and the cross itself?

2. Charity is "kind" And who so truly kind as Jesus, crying with loud voice, "It is finished," and bringing us life in the moment of His own death - proclaiming the sweetest news with the vinegar at His lips! When was Joseph so kind to his brethren? Who ever so heaped coals of fire upon an enemy's head?

3. If ever we are to learn the love that "envieth not," we must see it in Him who desired nought for Himself, but disinterestedly and unceasingly sought to make our condition better, happier, greater. If our Priest, who wore the robe without a seam, had worn the priestly mitre on His brow, on it would have been written, "More blessed to give than to receive." He interfered with none of our comforts, not even in thought: it was only with our miseries. Let us drink in His unenvious, unselfish love, leaving our fellow-men all the true good they have, anxious only to make them have as much as ourselves.

4. Looking to His Person again, we see "charity vaunteth not itself." In Him is no ostentation, no parade of His doings. We read all the gospels through, and never find His love put itself forward for show. He does not clothe the naked and tell that He has done it; or relieve a Lazarus, and then remind the man that He has done him a favour; or heal, and proclaim His rare skill. Even His redeeming love is rather set within our view in His actions and agonies, as in so many wells whence we may draw, than pressed on us in words. Nor did He upbraid, or taunt, or shout haughty triumph over a soul subdued and forgiven - so little of parade had He. His is a Father's love to a prodigal son, too glad to gain the opportunity of pouring out itself on its object. Where shall we learn unostentatious love, if not here?

5. Or are we to learn the love that "is not puffed up " - that has no inward self-gratulation, no self-complacent thought of its own magnanimity in the deed so kindly done? It is to be learned

surely by looking to Him who was satisfied in gaining His gracious object, in finding scope for love. No look or tone of His ever made His benefactions disagreeable to those who received them; for His was a charity that despised none, being the great love of God (Job 36:5). If we will learn holy love to others, let us learn it at Christ's holy love to us; as painters take for models the masterpieces of the best artists and copy them line by line.

6. Behold His love, and see how charity "doth not behave itself unseemly." You see a delicate propriety and a fine attention to the feelings in Christ's dealings of love. No rudeness, no harshness, no indiscretion; nothing mean, nothing unpolite; time, place, and persons were all consistently and tenderly considered. Even in this, the Righteous Servant "dealt prudently." With what tender delicacy, and yet determined love, did He deal with the woman of Samaria, till at last He had withdrawn the veil and confronted her conscience with her five husbands and the one that bore that name still! Even to Judas, in the hour of dark treachery, love could say, "Friend, wherefore art thou come ?" Never was there extravagant demonstration; never the shadow of affectation. There is seemly love to be learned in its perfection here, but only here, only in Jesus Himself.

7. And need we dwell on the charity "that seeketh not her own"? In the life and death of Him, who "was servant of all," we see this love to the full - the seeking love of God - the love that sought us and ours.

8. The same love is seen "not easily provoked." See it personified in Him who stands there and groans over the city, "Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together!" (Matthew 24:37). No bitter wrongs ever drew forth a hasty word, or angry look, or revengeful blow. They spat in His face, they plucked off His hair, they smote Him with the palms of their hand, they put on the purple robe - but it drew forth only love.

9. His love was charity that "thinketh no evil" - that never had a passing thought of injuring its worst foes, nor imagined them worse than they showed themselves to be. His were thoughts of peace, and not of evil, towards the men that crucified Him. "If thou hadst known, even thou!" (Luke 19:42).

10. It is at His side we see and learn "love rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." The good of those whom He loved He sought not to advance by any unholy gratification. His love was such as felt grieved at seeing its objects seeking happiness in ways not good and true. It had no joy in seeing iniquity anywhere, far less seeing it have place in the hearts of friends, however pleasing and fascinating that iniquity might be. The truth was what His love rejoiced in. Hence His love led him to protest and war against sinful pleasures and pursuits: for His love was no Eli-like fondness. It was love that would not give to those whom it embraced a cup in which one drop of gall was mingled, however much they thirsted. Where else shall we learn charity like this?

11. And then in Him we see love which "beareth all things " - endures trouble for others, and takes on itself the task of covering from view what is wrong.

12. This love, too, is love that" believeth all things." Yes, His love was a love ever ready to confide in its objects, ready to trust Matthew as soon as he was called, making him an Apostle, and then an Evangelist - ready to trust Peter, after his fall, bidding him "feed His sheep " - not suspicious and distrustful. Oh, to learn from Him such generous love ! Surely it is well for us to keep much company with Him in whom it dwells.

13. His love "hoped all things." It was like the love of a friend, who, sitting by the death-bed of one whom he loves, hopes on still, even when all physicians have given up hope - hopes because he loves so much and wishes what he hopes for. Such was the love of Jesus; not easily giving up its object - not soon cutting down its barren fig-trees (Luke 13:8). More of His love would make our life more perseveringly devoted to the good of others, however slight were the symptoms of success. And it is this we need in our day! And once more:

14. His, indeed, was the charity that "endured all things," which did not faint in its pursuit, nor was baffled by difficulties. "Many waters could not quench His love, nor could the floods drown it." Oh, to drink in this love - this holy charity! finding it all in the Saviour's Person.

Such was the portrait an Apostle drew, The bright original was one he knew;

Heaven held his hand - the likeness must be true (COWPER). But the tendency to imitate the person whom we love, and with whom we oft personally converse, extends to the feelings as well as actions. We drink deep into his sorrows and his joys. The Spirit of truth shows us "The Man of Sorrows;" and lifting up a little of the veil from such an hour as that which heard the cry, "Eli ! Eli!" discovers to us the unknown anguish which was borne as the wrath due to us. This woe, of course, we are not asked to bear, though into it we are ever to desire to look; but in His other sorrows there is much by sympathising with which we may be made to drink in His holiness. One of the sorrows that made Him cry, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove" (Leviticus 4:1-35; Leviticus 5:1-19; Leviticus 6:1-30), was the sight of a man's corruption. Into this feeling the soul that walks by the side of Jesus tries to enter. If, again, another source of sorrow to Christ was man's misery, so that He groaned in spirit at the sight (John 11:33), into this the companion of Jesus tries to enter. If another was the prospect of the doom overhanging sinners, with this, too, the believer sympathises, seeking to climb the Mount of Olives, and to stand with Jesus weeping over the guilty city (Luke 19:42). If Jesus is seen grieved over the fewness of the coming ones, "Where are the nine?" (Luke 17:17), or is heard expressing sorrowful surprise at the slow progress of His own (Luke 24:25), or if He watches like a sparrow alone (Psalms 102:6-7), or, "as an owl in the desert, as the pelican in the wilderness," content with His Father's sympathy - in all this the soul that loves the cormpany of "the Man of Sorrows" seeks to share. And by this means the Holy Ghost pours the melted soul into the mould of Christ's heart. Or, if it be the joys of the Man of Sorrows that he is tracing out, in these, too, he seeks to be like Him. One of Christ's joys - one brook by the way, of which He drank - was the certainty that the Father's will was done (Luke 10:21) ; a second was the consciousness that He Himself was doing the Father's will (John 9:34); a third was the presence of the Father felt around Him (Acts 2:25-26) ; a fourth, the conversion of sinners (Luke 15:1-32); a fifth, the growth of faith in His own (Matthew 8:10); and a sixth, the hope of the reward (Hebrews 12:2-3). In all these the growing believer, making Christ Himself his friend and divine companion, seeks to sympathise. He would fain be like Him whom he so loves.

There is something pleasant in noticing how Peter learnt to imitate his Lord by being so much in His company. When he goes to heal Dorcas (Acts 9:40-41) he put all out that wept and wailed, just as his Master did (Mark 5:37), and then the words, " Tabitha, arise," are brief, yet authoritative as his Master's "Talitha, cumi" (Mark 5:41). So also he lifts up the lame man at the Beautiful Gate by the right hand (Acts 3:7), just as he had seen his Lord do (Mark 1:31) at Capernaum to his relative in her fever. Even so in greater things, the disciple falls into his Master's way and manner. Read

his Epistles, and you see that, walking with the wise, he becomes wise; walking with the Gracious One, he becomes gracious; walking with Him who is holy, he becomes holy; walking with incarnate love and mercy, he becomes loving and merciful.

Among the friends of Alexander the Great, there was one named Hephaestion. It was said in regard to this man that he was "A lover of Alexander; " - none could doubt that man's personal affection for him. There was at the same time another friend, Oraterus, who seemed equally warm in heart and devotedness. It was, however, more because of the benefits conferred on him by one so exalted and great than from personal attachment - and hence he was said to be "A lover of the King." Which of these two most resembled their master in character? All history tells us it was Hephaestion, he who so loved the Person. And even so shall it be with the saint who dwells more on the Person of Immanuel than upon his gifts. The latter will be what was said of Peter (somewhat deprecatingly) by some of the ancients, "A lover of Christ," while the former will be what was said most truly of John, "A lover of Jesus " - and, like John, will bear close resemblance to his Lord in every peculiar trait.

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06.06. How This Looking to the Person Affects our Views of Death, ...

The Person of Christ

Andrew Bonar

Chapter 6.

How this looking to the Person affects our views of Death and our hope of the Lord's Second Coming. IN proportion as the soul advances in grace, its state coincides with that of the apostle, 'I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better; nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you' (Php 1:25). But at the same time that soul, if truly apostolic in its holiness, can add, 'Not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life' (2 Corinthians 5:4). It desires resurrection-bliss most of all, while, at the same time, it yearns after the lesser bliss of immediately passing into glory.

I. The main, and, indeed, the only, attraction of the intermediate state is this - there the redeemed see the Lord Jesus. He Himself is with them, and this is their heaven. In Revelation 6:9, the 'souls under the altar' are, undoubtedly, in this state; they are not represented in the glory of their resurrection state, as Revelation 7:15-17, and some passages may seem to set forth. These souls are at the altar, where they have taken up their station in order to cry for justice being done on the earth, as well as in order to show that justice is satisfied as to themselves; and there they are met by one who gives them 'white robes,' and who tells them they are to 'rest for a season;' leading them away to recline in their white robes on those couches of rest of which Isaiah (Isaiah 57:2) has told us. This is all we see of their outward bliss; but we cannot fail to notice that the 'rest' here, and in chap. Isaiah 14:13, is the continuation of the same 'rest' that their Lord from the very first spoke of giving (Matthew 11:28). It seems to be, like Lazarus in Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22), a reclining with the Lord Jesus in view - reclining at a feast with the eye fixed on Jesus in the midst. The moment a saint departs, he is 'with Christ.' This we read in Php 1:23, and, as we have already said, this 'being with Christ' is the essence of the bliss of that intermediate state, and is really all we know about it. The spirit of the departing one is received by Jesus (Acts 7:59); angels may receive it as it leaves the body (Luke 16:22), but they are not long of delivering it safe to their Lord. In His presence it rests, the sum of all its employments and its enjoyments being the sight and fellowship of the Lord Jesus. Nothing more is told us; for it would appear to be the design of the Lord to keep our eye on the Person of the beloved Son, as much on entering that unseen world as while here, and as much when arrived there as at entering.

'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.' They rest with Him, and see His face. They are gone to that 'mountain of myrrh and hill of frankincense' (Song of Solomon 4:6), where Jesus Himself sits - the right hand of the Father - and on the slopes of that hill they rest most pleasantly, beholding Him, and enjoying fellowship with Him, and waiting with Him for the daybreak and the flight of shadows. They are said to be 'in Paradise' (Luke 23:43), the name appropriated to some part of the glorious heavens where the throne of God is seen - appropriated to it because of being the

special spot where the children of the Second Adam are gathered together. As paradise was an inner part of Eden (Genesis 2:8), so is this abode of the redeemed an inner part of heaven. Perhaps it is the same as New Jerusalem. (Revelation 21:10) But at any rate, does not that name tell us of a place where God, as before the Fall, once more communes with men? It seems to say that the happy souls that dwell there, in light and love, are like unfallen Adam in his paradise - their chiefest joy being to hear the voice of the Lord God, to hear Him who is The Word of God.

We infer, then, that love to the Person of Jesus, and delight therein, is the state of mind nearest to that of those who have departed and are with Him. We are never more in sympathy with the saints departed than when rapt in intense meditation on the Lord's Person - examining the unspeakable gift, even Him 'in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' Never are we ourselves in a better frame for departing than when enabled by the spirit of wisdom and revelation to gaze on the Lord Jesus, and claim that Mercy-seat, and that Ark with all its contents, as our own. Never do we realise so well what it is to be separate from earth and enter the suburbs of heaven as when thus engrossed with Him who is our Plant of Renown, with all its fruit and foliage, freshness and fragrance, beauty and shade. Sitting, in such an hour, at the feet of Him who has 'the keys of death and the invisible world,' we are almost already ushered over the threshold.

II. But our attention is fixed more directly still upon the Person of the Lord Jesus, when we turn to the blessed hope, His Second Coming. The glories of that day are such, in themselves and in their influence on us, as to guide our eye to Him personally, and keep it resting on Him. When a believer is enabled to meditate much and often on 'that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of Him who is the Great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ,' his soul catches from afar something of the glory yet to be revealed - not unlike to what poetry has sung of the cheerful bird, 'the messenger of day,' which in the early dawn pours out its melody, soaring all the while higher and higher -'until the unrisen sun Gleams on its breast.' The believer, rapt into the future in his earnest anticipations, catches beams of that Better Sun which is yet to rise with healing on his wings. If the redeemed may say at death, 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness' (Psalms 17:15), much more may they add, in hope of that resurrection day, 'I shall be satisfied when I wake with His likeness', as if the rays of that morning were already shining on them with transforming power.

It shall be the Lamb Himself that shall lead each believer up from his quiet grave : - ' The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God.' (John 5:25.) As in the hour of conversion, awakening from their wordly dreams, they saw that stupendous sight, the Son of Man lifted up on the cross (John 3:3-14), so in the hour of the First Resurrection, they shall see His face again, not now marred, but become the seat of majesty, glory, beauty, as well as holy love. The Lamb Himself shall then lead them to living fountains and feed them as a shepherd (Revelation 7:17); and this will keep the thoughts of the glorified for ever on Himself. He is still their sun, whence beam forth light, and life, and joy - light, life, joy, worthy of the sore travail of His soul, worthy of His strong cries, worthy of His endless merits.

Why is it that we hope for That Day ? Let John reply, 'When He shall appear we shall be like Him (1 John 3:2), for we shall see Him as He is.' Or let Paul tell how he, and Clement, and Epaphroditus, and the saints of Caesar's household, and all the believers whom he knew, anticipated that day. He says that it was the Lord Himself they delighted to look for. It was not so much the triumphs of that day, nor its palms, and crowns, and white robes, and shouts of

Hallelujah over sorrows for ever vanished; but it was the thought of the Lord Himself being there that made that day so joyful. 'Our conversation is in heaven, whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ' (Php 3:21). And when they associated their own blessedness with these anticipations, it was in this form - 'We shall be LIKE HIM.' 'He shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned LIKE UNTO HIS GLORIOUS BODY!'

What is this that Isaiah promises? 'The Lord shall be unto her an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory!' (Isaiah 60:19). No stretch of thought can conceive the amount of honour and bliss expressed in these few words. And what is this that the same prophet promises to each one that now walks with God? He says, happy soul, 'Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty' (Isaiah 32:17). This is the highest hope He can hold out to thee; this is the greatest of His rewards; this is His best joy. Thine eyes shall see, and not be dim ; thine eyes shall see, and not be dazzled into blindness; thine eyes shall see, and gaze with calm and constant delight on 'the King in His beauty' This is a promise of a true Transfiguration-day to thee. What was it that led the astonished multitude at the foot of the hill to run the Son of Man as He descended from the scene of His brief Transfiguration? (Mark 9:5). What caused that assembly to salute Him with such reverence? Was it not the impression produced on them by even a few lingering beams of glory, that hung on His form as the brightness did on Moses after his forty days' interview with God ? And if that were so then, while He was seen under the returning clouds of sorrow, and while they who saw had not been fully anointed with the eye-salve that they might discern His real beauty, what may we not expect to enjoy on that day when the prophet's words are realised, 'Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty!' Are you a disciple whose eyes are often wistfully turned to the heavens, like the men of Galilee on the day of His ascension? You shall not always gaze in vain: 'Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.' Thou shalt see Him who is 'The fellow of the Almighty,' and yet also 'Man' (Zechariah 13:7); who can tell of 'men being His fellows' at the very moment that the Father proclaims him 'God' (Hebrews 1:9); whose human countenance, lighted up now with the 'joy unspeakable and full of glory,' tells what ecstasy is found in the Father's love; who is the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of His person, revealing Godhead to the very sense of the creature, in a manner so attractive and heart-satisfying that the song of rapturous delight never has a pause.

Art thou a weary pilgrim? Walk on a little longer with thine eye still toward the Right Hand of the Majesty on high; for soon thou shalt see 'the King in His beauty.' Hast thou been vexed, like righteous Lot, from day to day, in seeing and learning earth's wickedness? hast thou been saddened by witnessing death ravaging families, and removing some of thine own dearest ones? hast thou but dimly descried amid thy tears the form of Him who walked on the sea at midnight to reassure His dejected and trembling disciples? hast thou often been disappointed when thou didst think thou hadst got a look of things within the veil that would for ever turn thine eyes from beholding vanity ? - be of good cheer, ' Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.' Thy heaven shall consist in seeing Him as He is - knowing Him as He knoweth thee.

Among all the rewards offered to those who overcome, by the Captain of Salvation (when, after a sixty years' absence, He visited His suffering disciple in Patmos face to face), none is so magnificent, none so soul-filling, as that wherein He offers Himself in His glory. In this promised reward He may be said to offer us to Himself at the time when all His own reward has been bestowed, and when Himself has been anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. He

writes, 'To him that overcometh and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of My Father.' Is not this enough? No, not yet; one thing more and better still by far, 'And I will give him the Morning Star' (Revelation 2:28). That is, I will give him Myself at the time I appear as 'Bright and Morning Star' (Revelation 22:16), rising in our sky after a night of gloom, the harbinger of an endless day. The great bliss of that day is this, the gift of Christ Himself at a time when joy, peace, love, and glory, and the holiness, wisdom, power, and majesty of Godhead, are the beams that radiate from His person, and bathe those on whom He shines.

If, believer, you love much that Person of whom we have all along in these pages been speaking, then press on to the day of His coming, for then it is you are to get Him in His fullest glory. Then it is you are to get as your Redemption Him who has been your Wisdom, your Righteousness, your Sanctification. That 'Tower of David' was long ago gifted to you, with all its armoury; but your time for entering on the possession of it is now when it is furnished with whatever is magnificent, and royal, and heavenly, and divine; creation's riches being stored up therein. You shall see the Lord Jesus as yours at a time when His own and the Father's glory, and the glory of His angels, all combine to set forth His person. 'And your look that day shall be (says one) that of an owner, not the shy gaze of a passer-by.' That Christ, on yonder throne, is mine! With all His glory He is mine! That King of Kings, that Lord of Lords in His royal apparel, is mine! That beloved Son, whom the Father delighteth to honour for evermore, is mine! All that He is, all that He has, is mine! Does not this prospect make a present life seem dull? It pours contempt on earth's fairest scenes! It mocks ambition. It makes coveteousness appear folly and infatuation. It renders trial light and duty easy! Christ Himself ours! ours on that day when 'His peace' and 'His joy' are at their height! Our life is discovered to be 'Christ' (Colossians 3:4). Oh what a Christ that day reveals! The more intently we pore over what is to arrive on that day, we do the more intently gaze on the Person of the Son of God. We are kept in the very posture in which the Gospel of His First Coming placed us. On the one hand, we find that His coming to die and overcome death sends us forward to the coming again of Him who so overcame ; but on the other, no sooner are we in His presence, amid His own and the Father's glory, than, in grateful remembrance, we go back to him as He appeared to us in His low estate - these two views of Him so act and react on each other, combining to keep us ever in the attitude of beholding Himself.

There is to be no new Gospel for ever; and can there be need of any? The coming of the Lord shall fully unveil His Person, in whom all the Gospel is stored up. The feast of fat things full of marrow, in Isaiah 26:6, is the visible, as well as inward, discovery of His matchless person, in the day of His glory, when the pure canopy of the New Heavens, and the beauty shed over a Restored Creation, with all the teeming luxuriance of its hills and plains, and the melody of attendant harpers harping on the harps of heaven, shall be all but forgotten, because of the presence of the 'King in His beauty.' Called in from the hedges and highways (Matthew 12:1-10), we feast even at present on fragments of this greater feast; but we get as yet little more than the crumbs - for little indeed do we see of the real glory of the Lord. The Holy Spirit then, even as now, will continue to glorify Christ. There will be a fully unveiled Christ before us, and also there will be in us the Holy Spirit (unresisted by us and no longer grieved), springing up to eternal life, showing us His beauty. One difference only will there be - at present He gives us but drops, then He will pour upon us the horn

of oil; and so shall we enter into the full joy of the Lord, not a scale left on our eye, nor one film left of the earthly mist that used to prevent our seeing Him who is the Image of God. The days of eternity shall pass on, and our eye shall never weary of looking on Him, but 'shall gaze upon His glories, as the eagle is said to do upon the meridian sun.' Ages upon ages pass, and still He is to us all in all. We admit the light from His Person freely now; never did Moses so eagerly survey the goodly land from Pisgah, as we now survey the glories of the Lamb. We get looks into that heart where love has dwelt from everlasting, and where love shall dwell to everlasting. Eternity is in its full course! Long, long ago, we lost sight of the shores of time, and still He is the unexhausted and inexhaustible fountain to us of 'Good tidings of Great Joy!' Eternity only serves to let in upon our souls the fulness of the blessing given to us in the day when we received Him, and began to have fellowship in His Gospel. The Gospel is still 'THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL;' for Christ is its substance; Christ is its essence; Christ is its Alpha and Omega; and the life it has brought us is out of 'Christ our life,' and must be 'Life Everlasting.'

Henceforth, then, this one thing I do: 'I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord. I do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and that I may know Him. I follow after if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. I forget those things which are behind, and reach forth unto those things which are before - I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus' (Php 3:8-10, Php 3:12, Php 3:14). Dr. Owen spent some of the best years of his life in writing the 'Treatise on the Person of Christ,' and some of his last days in preparing for the press his 'Meditations on the Glory of Christ.' On the very day he died, a friend came to tell him that his book was now in the press, at which he expressed satisfaction. 'But, O Brother,' said he, 'the long looked for day is come at last, in which I will see that glory in another manner than I have ever done yet, or was capable of doing in this world !'

O Holy Spirit, grant that all of us may be found by the Lord when He calls, or when He comes, thus occupied in meditation on His Person and Glory, ready to start up at the call, saying to one another, 'O Brother, the looked for day is come at last !'

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06.07. Appendix

The Person of Christ

Andrew Bonar

APPENDIX Extracts from old Authors.

"God would have us pitch our faith upon The Person of His Son, and not barely upon the Promise. And therefore, He has so ordered things in His divine wisdom that the Promises should all hold on Christ, and be Yea and Amen in Him." - TILLINGHAST's Six Sermons, p. 9.

"Saving faith is in the nature of it not a mere assent to a testimony, but a receiving and resting upon The Person of Jesus Christ alone, for salvation both from sin and wrath, and unto all the grace and glory of God." - CUDWORTH's Experience, p. 10.

"Those Divines who in their Catechetical Systems have made the formal object of Faith to be the Promise, rather than The Person of Christ, have failed in their expressions, if not in their intentions." - SPURSTOW on Romans 6:1.

"Folk must go first to Christ's Person before they can get good of His offices. Folk must make a direct address to the Person of the Mediator before they reap His purchase. Pardon is sweet, adoption is sweet, grace is sweet, heaven is sweet; but Christ is sweeter. " - WEBSTER'S Sermons, p. 88.

"Faith does not marry the soul to the portion, benefits, and privileges of Christ, but to Christ Himself. I don't say that the soul may not have an eye to these, and a respect to these in closing with Christ; yea, usually these are the first things that faith has in its eye. But the soul does, and must go higher; he must look at and pitch upon The Person of Christ, or his faith is not so right and complete as it ought to be. It is The Person of Christ that is the great fountain of all grace and of all manifestations of God to us; and faith accordingly does close with His Person." - PEARSE's Best Match, p. 160.

Such delight had Samuel Rutherford in The Person of Christ that he writes to his friends such things as the following : - " Holiness is not Christ; the blossoms and flavours of the Tree of Life are not the Tree itself" (Lett. 335). "He, He Himself, is more excellent than heaven. Oh, what a life were it to sit beside this Well of Love, and drink and sing, sing and drink!" (Lett. 288). "My greatest pain is want of Him; not of His joys and comforts, but of a near union and communion." "I have casten this work upon Christ, to get in Himself" (Lett. 187; Lett. 112). "I would be farther in upon Christ than at His joys, in where love and mercy lodgeth - beside His heart !" (Lett. 286). "Oh, if I could doat as much upon Himself as I do upon His love!" (Lett. 160). "I would fain learn not to idolise comfort, sense, joy, and sweet-felt presence. All these are but creatures, and nothing but the kingly robe, the golden ring, the bracelets of the Bridegroom. The Bridegroom Himself is better than all ornaments that are about Him" (Lett. 168). "If the comparison could stand, I would not exchange Christ with heaven itself" (Lett. 111).

Once more. A century ago, Romaine (Life of Faith, p. 159) thus wrote in expounding the verses 1 John 2:13-14, - " Many continue little children and weak in faith, because they do not presently attain a solid acquaintance with The Person of Christ." The sum of the matter is this. There is a vast difference between, on the one hand, believing day by day in a living Saviour, and on the other, resting satisfied with the salvation He brings, as if that were all.

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07.00. The Twelve Tribes

The Twelve Tribes by Bonar, Andrew

Originally published as a serial for The Scattered Nation, in 1866, this is a most interesting series on the tribes of Israel.

Chapters Chapter 1 - Reuben Chapter 2 - Simeon Chapter 3 - Levi Chapter 4 - Judah

Chapter 5 - Dan Chapter 6 - Naphtali Chapter 7 - Orders of the Twelve Tribes Chapter 8 - Asher Chapter 9 - Issachar Chapter 10 - Zebulun Chapter 11 - Joseph, i.e. Ephraim and Manasseh Chapter 12 - Benjamin Source: http://dustandashes.com/2176.htm

07.01. Reuben

REUBEN. In the review we hope to be able to take of the twelve tribes, our object is not so much to inquire into their history, as to trace the descent of each, and mark how each got its complexion from its forefather. For it is very remarkable that, for the most part, each tribe is spoken of both in Jacob's prediction and in Moses' blessing in terms that bear reference to the patriarch who founded it, and to circumstances connected with his personal history. As the sin of Adam spread its dark shadow over all his race, so in some degree the special acts of the twelve patriarchs affected all generations of their descendants. Mysterious truth! but truth that cannot be gainsayed!

We begin with Jacob's first-born-, Reuben. In Genesis 29:32, we have the record of his birth. It was with something like proud exultation over Rachel that Leah exclaimed, ******"Behold ye have a son! Come and see what the Lord hath given me!" She had been for a time suffering the consequences of the part she took in the deception practised upon Jacob by Laban. She had felt sorely the coolness of Jacob's love toward her, and had discerned also the apparent frown of Jehovah in her temporary barrenness. But now the sun has shone through the cloud, and very beautifully does she acknowledge the giver: "Surely Jehovah hath looked upon my affliction." She traces events to their true cause, the loving-kindness of "The Father of lights," who sends every good gift. Family trials, as well as family mercies, are all from Him. Secret wounds, heart-burnings, gloom, and smiles, are not unnoticed, nor uncared for. Then further, Leah expected much comfort from this gift. "My husband will love me." This is to be one result. This son shall be the corner-stone of the family building. "See, a son!" This is another expected result, combined with the anticipation that of course she shall be looked upon with wistful envy by others. But alas! like Eve with Cain, she was destined to be disappointed in the main subject of her exultation. As Eve fondly hoped that Cain, "a man gotten from the Lord," was to be her comfort and joy, yet found him her bitterest sorrow; so did Leah, too, soon discover that this son of her womb was to be a sword in her bones, when in after-years "he defiled his father's bed" (Genesis 35:22).

Sad indeed was the after-history. Jacob (Genesis 44:4 felt it profoundly, and was directed by the Holy Ghost to express God's abhorrence of the incestuous act by that prediction, "Unstable as water, thou shall not excel:" effervescing, or boiling over ******in insolent pride and uncontrollable desire, thou shalt pay the penalty.

"Reuben, thou art my first-born, My might, even the first fruit of my strength, Pre-eminent in dignity, pre-eminent in power." This thou art by natural right; yet because of thy sin, the frown of Jehovah visits thee and thine;

"Thou shalt have no exaltation," no distinction above thy brethren. The leadership of Israel is thus withdrawn from him, along with the birthright, as 1 Chronicles 5:1-2, particularly notes. Neither he nor any of his tribe rose to commanding influence in Israel.

Sorrowful Leah! With thee, in thy crushed hopes, well could Eve have sympathized. If thou mournest over an adulterer of no common degree, she mourned over a murderer, a fratricide. Let

no parent after this embark too much hope in such bulrush-vessels. The gift may be prized, but must not be over-valued nor trusted in. There is only one such vessel of which it is safe for us to boast: it is not Cain, nor Reuben, but another son, "The Son given to us" (Isaiah 9:5). Of Him let us boast. "Behold a Son indeed!" God's Son. He disappoints no hopes, and to Him must Eve repair in her bitter grief, and Leah with her blighted prospects, and Eli weeping his eyes blind over Hophni and Phinehas, and David groaning till his kingdom hear it, over Absalom. "Behold a Son!" ********The true Reuben is God's Firstborn. When Moses (Deuteronomy 33:6) speaks of the tribe of Reuben, it is quite plain that the same Spirit is guiding his utterance. There is the same tone in his words- "Let Reuben live!

Let not Reuben die, and his men be few!" This is all. No pre-eminence, even though his tribe multiply as to numbers. His people are to be ******* "mortals," not "warriors" in any remarkable manner. It was at best the blessing that came on Ishmael, "Oh that Ishmael might live before thee" (Genesis 17:18). The sin of this patriarch-father deserved death in every sense; extinction from Israel, as well as degradation. But pardon is granted: he is to "live, and not die;" though from him must pass away the birthright office of chief-ruler, and all notable pre-eminence. His history sounds through Israel's hosts in all generations: "Flee youthful lusts!" "Whoso committeth adultery, lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul: a wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away" (Proverbs 6:32-33).

Still, Reuben was spared and pardoned; his name was on the High Priest's breastplate, and a loaf stood for him on the golden table. And we find him in after-days walking softly (may we not say?) in his appointed lot beyond Jordan. He did nobly in the seven years' war under Joshua for the possession of Canaan, when associated with Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and along with them received the meed of praise for brotherly help and faithfulness to his pledged word (Joshua 22:1-9). But this is the one only time that Reuben shines, and even then he has no pre-eminence above Gad and Manasseh. So also when he contributes his share to the 120,000 valiant men who came to David "with all manner of instruments of war" (1 Chronicles 12:37), there is no superiority claimed for him. On the other hand, he shrinks back in the day of battle, when Barak and Deborah go forth (Judges 5:16).

"At the streams of Reuben There were great resolves of heart;" but what did they end in? In inactivity and unbrotherly withholding of help, unlike his earlier days (Joshua 1:12-15); so that the prophetess upbraids him, and stigmatizes his unworthy attitude:

"Why abodest thou among the sheep-folds, To hear the bleating of the flocks!" rather than come on the battle-field, and hear the trumpet and the clash of arms.

We read of the early captivity of this tribe (1 Chronicles 5:6). It was among the first of the tribes carried into exile: proud Nineveh witnessed the spectacle of Beerah, Prince of Reuben, led along her streets in chains-the last prince of the tribe! His brethren, left behind in their land, were roused to effort, and, under energetic chiefs, recovered possession of the region "from Aroer to Nebo" (1 Chronicles 5:7-8); and finding the pastures of Gilead unoccupied, quietly settled down upon them, enjoying a short season of tranquillity. But it was only the lamp shooting up "a flickering flame" ere it sank away in its socket.

We said that once only did Reuben’s light shine brilliantly. We may, however, add that in the days of Saul they got some renown by a victory over the Hagarites (1 Chronicles 5:10). In after-times they sink out of view. Once only was their territory signalized by any remarkable exploit. That one event was the Battle of Medeba (1 Chronicles 19:7-19). Within their boundaries also stood that mountain, never to be forgotten, viz., Nebo, with its summit, Pisgah, whence Moses viewed the land; a mountain of melancholy interest, a grave and a monument. And let us note that Heshbon and Elealeh, of which Isaiah says (Isaiah 16:9), "I will water thee with my tears; Jazer too, and Sibmah, over which Jeremiah (Jeremiah 48:32) plaintively laments, "I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer," were in Reuben’s land. Dibon also and Bajith were here, to the high places whereof "they went up to weep." Altogether we see the stamp and gloom of their forefather’s sin ever re-appearing in this tribe.

Nevertheless in the latter day, Reuben’s stains shall no more appear. In Ezekiel 48:6-7, we find his portion between Ephraim and Judah-a position of honour surely, indicating restoration from the fall in which his forefather involved him? "Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion!" Let Israel know that spiritual adultery, as a people, has been their ruin. They left Jehovah: and when He came to his own, clothed in our humanity; when He stood on their hills, and wept over them; they sternly rejected Him. And never since that hour have they prospered. "They shall not excel," is Israel’s doom, as it was Reuben’s, until they shall come in the latter day to wash away the stain of their enormous sin in "the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness" (Zechariah 13:1). Then shall they return to honour and excellency.

PISGAH IN THE TRIBE OF REUBEN. (Deuteronomy 34:5) "SWEET was the journey to the sky, The holy prophet tried;

‘Climb up the mount,’ said God, ‘and die:’ The prophet climbed and died.

"Softly, with fainting head, he lay Upon his Maker’s breast; His Maker soothed his soul away, And laid his flesh to rest.

"In God’s own arms he left the breath Which God’s own Spirit gave; His was the noblest road to death, And his the sweetest grave."

WATTS.

07.02. Simeon

SIMEON. THE ear of God is at the world’s tent-door; He hears the cry of its sin. His ear is at the tent-door of every family; He listens to what is said in love or hatred, in prayer or praise, by parent or by child. But the I notice He takes of what He hears is not by words only; more frequently it is by deeds. Leah knew this when she named her second son "Simeon," which means "Hearing," significantly intimating that the Lord by the providence of this birth had taken notice of the unhappy disagreements of Jacob’s family. " Because the Lord hath heard that I was hated, He hath therefore given me this son also" (Genesis 29:33). The Lord had heard the upbraiding, the bitter word, the unkind remark, too frequent in Jacob’s dwelling, from the lips of Rachel; and to rebuke her, sent this gift of a son, not to her but to her hated sister.

Earth is the Lord’s larger family. "Behold, alI souls are mine" (Ezekiel 18:4). His providence is testifying among his own people that He hears the report of their deeds, as well as their words; and soon they who speak "often one to the other" (Mal. iii. 16) shall discover that "the Lord hearkened and heard," for his book of remembrance and his reward shall testify it to the full. Soon, too, all earth shall know it, for the due reward shall overtake each man, and compel him to say, "Ah, the Lord heard what I said and did! He has rendered to me according to my deeds."

Because of the import and early associations of the name, it became common among the families of the other tribes, so that we have Simon Peter, or the Sea of Galilee; old Simeon, at Jerusalem; Simon, of Cyrene; not to speak of others historically famous also. At Simeon’s birth, it was what his parents spoke and did that was specially marked; but in after-years it was Simeon’s own evil report that came up into the ears of God. Simeon and Levi joined in unholy brotherhood to take vengeance, deceitfully, cruelly, and sacrilegiously, on the men of Sychem. O Simeon, Jehovah is a God that heareth! In the days of Sodom, "the cry of it came up to Him," and "the cry was very great," like the cry of the blood of Abel from the ground; but thy very name, Simeon, might have warned thee that thy deeds also must come to his ear. Accordingly, his own father, with breaking heart, must utter Jehovah’s sentence on him and his seed (Genesis 49:5-7).

"Simeon and Levi are brethren, (Yes, brethren in guilt and sin): Their swords are weapons of wickedness.

O my soul, come not thou into their counsel; With their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united, For they slew men in their fury, And houghed oxen in their wantonness;

(They spared neither man nor beast).

Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce, And their fury, for it was cruel."

This, therefore, (says dying Jacob) is the sentence which I am called upon by the Lord to pronounce on them, as a protest against all deceit and violence. I utter it with reluctance, and yet without one misgiving as to its justice.

"I will divide them in Jacob, And scatter them in Israel."

Born at a time when his father's house was in a state of disunion, Simeon, in after-days, by his own cruel deeds, dissociated himself from the sympathy of his father and brethren; and now he hears that in the days to come, the tribe that is to descend from him shall ever bear the impress of this unhappy beginning. It shall be a scattered and divided tribe.

Now, was it so?

We turn to the farewell blessing of Moses in Deuteronomy 33:1-29. to seek for Simeon and any word of favour to him there; but in vain. In their encampments at that period his tribe used to pitch side by side with Reuben, as we find in Numbers 2:12 : "And those which pitch by him shall be the tribe of Simeon," a host of 59,300 men. And yet Moses, whose eye had so often rested on these tents, has no blessing for him at the last. Did the infamous sin of "Zimri, the son of Salu, a prince of a chief house among the Simeonites" (Numbers 24:14), slain in the act of his adultery by Phinehas, witness against the whole tribe, and bring to remembrance their first father's sin; as a recent wound often revives the smart of scars left long ago? At all events, Moses had no blessing to bestow on unhappy Simeon. Not that he forgot him, for in the commencement of Judah' s blessing, it seems as if he had the name of Simeon in his thoughts when he thus began: "Hear, Lord, the voice" ******. Be to Judah in the better way what Thou has from the first been to Simeon in the way of rebuke.

Simeon's tribe was one of the foremost in going to battle against the Canaanites after Joshua's death. He nobly went up with Judah to war: "Judah said unto his brother Simeon, Come up with me into my lot, and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot" (Judges 1:3). And they went together (Judges 1:17), and at Zephath, or Hormah, won complete victory. Judah fulfilled his pledge of helping his brother, for this Hormah was allotted to Simeon by Joshua (Joshua 19:4). But then it turns out that this city and all the cities given to Simeon (such as Beersheba and Ziklag) were "out of the inheritance of the children of Judah;" so that Simeon is dispersed among the tribe of Judah, and has no separate portion assigned him as his own. In this way, Jacob's prophetic words begin to be realized; and yet at the same time, in this very way, the dew of the blessing pronounced on Judah by Moses falls in part upon Simeon also. Indeed, at one juncture they seem to have outstripped Judah in zeal. For, in the days of David's trial, Simeon furnished 7100 "mighty men of valour" (1 Chronicles 12:25) to the Lord's cause, while Judah sent only 6800. But the after-history of the tribe was destined to set forth a far fuller illustration of Jacob's words regarding their being "divided and scattered." Simeon (as we have seen) never had any compact territory of his own, and probably it was because of this that he was ready to go forth beyond the borrowed possessions yielded up to him by Judah. We find him, at any rate, setting out upon an expedition against Gedor, possessed by the sons of Ham. This was in the days of King Hezekiah (1 Chronicles 4:39-41). Perhaps the defeat of Sennacherib's mighty host may have revived the old faith and courage in the men of Israel, who could not but see that the Jehovah who fought for Joshua was Jehovah still. We find thirteen chiefs of Simeon leading a band of elect warriors to this Gedor, where they come upon a people living in idolatry, quiet and secure (as quiet and secure as their father Simeon had found the men of Sychem, though in far other circumstances), upon whom they burst like a flood that sweeps all before it. It was an exploit that resembled the assault of the Danites on Laish, this occurring in the far south of the land, as did that other in the far north, but both furnishing (may we not say?) a sample of the Lord's ways toward a thoughtless world. "When they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction shall come upon them, and they shall

not escape" (1 Thessalonians 5:3). It has been thus; and it shall be thus with all the earth when the Lord himself shall come.

Here Simeon found pasture "fat and good," but far from his proper lot, so that he is "scattered and divided." And then yet more; it is recorded in 1 Chronicles 4:42-43, that his valiant men turned their arms against a remnant of Amalekites who had settled among the hills of Seir. That band of 500 warriors was led on by four redoubtable leaders, all sons of one man, Ishi, who had named his sons at their birth by names that spoke of the true ground of confidence, viz., Pelatiah, "Jehovah delivers;" Neariah, "Jehovah is the light;" Rephaiah, "Jehovah is the healer" (or, "Jehovah is the true Giant"); and Uzziel, "God is my strength." Their expedition was crowned with success, and Mount Seir became another settlement for the tribe of Simeon. Simeon is blessed, but he is "scattered and divided," found in Judah, in Gedor, and in the hills of Seir.

People of Israel, why are you "scattered and peeled" at this hour? Why are you not a compact nation in your own land? Is it not because you have had fathers who without any provocation (in this far worse than Simeon and Levi at Sychem) "slew men in their fury"? What men? The Man Christ Jesus, the God-man, and his people.

"Why are Jacob’s sons afflicted?

Why is Israel still a slave? Has it not been long predicted That the Lord would Zion save?

"Why do heathen, proud oppressors, Rule her sons with iron hand?

Why are Gentiles now possessors Of her Iong-neglected land?

"Go and trace the sacred story, There we read the awful cause:

They have slain the Lord of glory, They have trampled on his laws."

07.03. Levi

LEVI. THE Lord works for his own glory by raising "the poor from the dust and the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes." Out of strange materials, surely, did He rear up the house of Israel! And nothing might excite in us more amazement than his dealings with LEVI, from whose loins He is pleased to cause a most noble line of priests and sanctuary-ministers to descend. Sovereign grace! what may not thy love and wisdom bring to pass! In the tribe of Levi, as in Reuben and Simeon, we trace in all after-ages the taint of his first father’s sin, and find that sin giving a peculiar complexion to his lot; while, at the same time, we trace no less distinctly throughout all after-generations, a reference to the origin of his name, which means "Joined," or in an abstract form, "Joining."

1. At his birth Leah thought (Genesis 29:34) that Jacob would be completely won over by this third son, presented to him as another arrow wherewith to fill his quiver. "Now, this time shall my husband be joined to me, because I have born him three sons." She knew the power of benefits, how a gift makes room for a man, pacifying anger, and prospering a man’s plans (Proverbs 17:8 and Proverbs 18:16). Probably her hope was realized, for her next son gets the thankful name of "Praise" (Judah), as if all were going on to her mind. From his birth, then, Levi was one whose province and mission seemed to be to join together parties that otherwise might have stood aloof and alone.

2. Next follows the history of his youth; and there he teaches how sin may join men together. In Jacob’s prophetic utterance (Genesis 49:3) he appears as the close confederate of Simeon in cruelty and blood- "Simeon and Levi are brethren."

What a union!

"0 my soul, come not that into their secret."

They combine; hand joins in hand, and the enterprise appears successful. But they who sin together must suffer together they must be joined in punishment. And so the sentence comes forth on Levi, as on Simeon: "I will divide him in Jacob, And scatter him in Israel."

He drags this clanking chain on his foot in all succeeding time. He gets no portion or lot like his brethren, no compact territory; but is divided and scattered over the length and breadth of the land, getting forty eight cities for his habitation, furnished by the other eleven tribes. He is to be found north, south, east, and west; in Judah, in Ephraim, in Asher, in Gad, in Reuben, "scattered and divided," because he joined Simeon in sin.

3. But there are other aspects of his history. The history of his descendants, who were joined to Moses at Sinai, teaches God’s way of joining alienated men to Himself. It was the day of the golden calf and its terrible scenes. The proclamation ran through the camp, "Who is on the Lord’s side? let him come unto me" (Exodus 32:26). None stirred a foot but the men of the tribe of Levi; and they joined Moses in executing the Lord’s vengeance on the idolaters; for they girded on their

swords, passed from gate to gate through the camp, slew all they met, even brothers, and companions, and neighbours-all, in order to win the blessing promised. For the clause of the proclamation was to this effect, "Consecrate yourselves to-day unto the Lord, every man upon his son and upon his brother, that He may bestow upon you a blessing to-day." In this they honoured the holiness and justice of the Lord, dreadful as the action might appear; and this homage to Jehovah's justice and holiness was accepted at their hand. Is it not ever thus? It is when a sinner is brought to sympathize with the Lord's views of sin, and with the Lord's justice in his wrath against it, that the Lord is reconciled to him. The sinner's acknowledgment of the cross, where the sword smote the man who was our Brother and the Almighty's Fellow, is equivalent to the action of Levi, in drawing the sword against the sin around him.

4. Yet again. The history of Levi's descendants, who ministered before God in the sanctuary, teaches us yet more fully God's way of joining to Himself alienated men; for the Levites stand there, from age to age, handling the sacred vessels, and engaging in the rites that exhibit the Divine plan of reconciliation. It is they, and only they who, as priests of Aaron's line, present the sacrifices-the blood, the fat, the incense, the drink-offering-all, in short, that tells of man re-joined to God. He is LEVI ("JOINING") in all his history. Day by day thus he, in the atoning sacrifice, set forth God's justice honoured; God's holy abhorrence or sin; God's flaming and consuming wrath against the sinner who goes on in his trespass, refusing to bring it to the altar and to the blood. Levi at Sinai, and Levi in the tabernacle and temple, is alike a witness for God's unbending holiness and immaculate justice, even while He receives the guilty in the appointed way.

It was on Levi as joined to the Lord, and as thereafter to be the tribe which should in a manner join others to the Lord, that Moses poured out his full and fervent blessing (Deuteronomy 33:8-11). He begins, in that blessing, with the mention of the "Urim and Thummim " (Lights and Perfections; i.e., complete light and complete perfection), but he nowhere describes what this Urim and Thummim mean. Many are the theories on the subject; but perhaps the simplest of all is that which understands it to be the LAW, which in the ark was written on tables of stone, but which within the folds of the breastplate was written on some other material, yet set fort. the same truth, viz., that He who goes for us into God's presence, as priest and mediator, must have the law on his heart, must honour and magnify that law, which is perfect, and which is all light and no darkness at all. With allusion, then, to this typical priest, Moses sang- "Let thy Urim and thy Thummim belong to the man of thy Holy One;" let it be ever in charge of the appointed priest. The priest is called ******* "the man of thy Holy One" (like Psalms 80:17,*****); that Holy One whom they tempted at Massah, along with the other tribes of Israel. Their share in that provocation is mentioned that they might in no wise be elated because of this honour. Let the breastplate which contains the law be ever in charge of the priest who is at the head of thy tribe; and be thou ever zealous for that law, even as when at Sinai thou showedst thyself on the Lord's side, in spite of father, mother, brethren. This is the tribe who shall in all after-ages have the high honour of teaching all Israel- "They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law;

They shall put incense before Thee, and whole burnt-offerings upon thine altar." A blessed work, surely! showing men by type and symbol, as well as by clearer word, the way of acceptance with God-the way of acceptable worship-the way of daily service. And in so doing his "substance" is blessed, his "works" are pleasing to God, and his "foes" are powerless, smitten by the God whom Levi serves.

Now, this tribe being scattered all over the land in their forty-eight cities, with their enclosures (not "castles," as translated in 1 Chronicles 6:54) for cattle and flocks, walked everywhere as witnesses for God in the: happy days of their early service; for Malachi (Malachi 2:6) declares about Levi in those days, "The law of truth was in his mouth and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity." See those men of Levi at Hebron, teaching that lately arrived manslayer, who has there found a city of refuge! See that Levite at Sychem, near Jacob's Well, gathering round him a group of the men of Ephraim, to teach them the teachings which daily go on in the temple at Jerusalem! See them opening up the law to a company on the fragrant hills of Gilead beyond Jordan; see them at Ramoth Gilead, or at Mahanaim, or by the banks of Arnon, testifying by their very presence for God's justice, holiness, mercy, and loving-kindness. This is a joining tribe all over! He is LEVI in his history, as well as in his birth.

5. But Levi is rich in suggestive lessons, in almost every view you can take of him. We might teach from his case much about sin; e. g., sin separating man and man, as seen in Jacob's family at the time of Levi's birth; sin separating man and God, as seen in the effects of his foul conspiracy against Shechem; man, separated by sin, brought back to God through justice honoured. More particularly we might weave a whole web of spiritual truth from the threads of Levi's history by using different stages of his existence- to illustrate different doctrines. It stands thus: (a) In the turning of his curse into a blessing, or, in other words, by making use of his scattered and divided condition as the very means of pervading Israel with the knowledge of Jehovah, we have an illustration of the Lord's way in redemption. While Simeon's curse (divided and scattered) is left unalleviated, Levi's is used for great ends of good. This is altogether like the Lord, who in sovereignty passes by whom He will, and shows favour where He will, but in both cases from reasons of highest holiness and wisdom, though hidden from us. (b) In the history of Levi's youthful days we see a full-length portrait of the natural man. It is forbidding and repulsive, exhibiting all the strength of original corruption. He was educated in. Jacob's tents, under a godly father's care; was accustomed to stand at God's altar and see the sacrifice; often heard the story of his father's vision at Bethel; was kept as much as Joseph from the Canaanite idolatries; and yet, alas! the evil is unsubdued, and godly education is thrown away upon the man. Nay, fierce, cruel passions appear, and the young man rushes forth to gratify them. Under Jacob's roof the viper is nourished; under Jacob's shadow grows the all-blasting upas-tree; self-will, revenge, murderous hatred, are developed amid holy counsels and holy example. Levi, with his brother Simeon, even dares to use the sacrament of circumcision as a preparation for assault, urging the men of Shechem to use it only in order to unfit them for defence. It was a deed as foul as if we had persuaded an unarmed company to sit down at the Lord's table, and then came upon them with weapons of death as they were eating the bread and taking the wine. And what is all this but the unfolding of the natural heart, "deceitful and desperately wicked"? Over such a one hangs the curse, the indignation, and wrath of an insulted God. "I will divide them, I will scatter them!" (c)Yet see how God can change the natural man and remove the curse. Go to the foot of Horeb on the day of the golden calf (Exodus 32:25-29), and there you find how the Spirit of God had silently been penetrating Levi's families. Not only were Amram and Jochebed illustrious instances of grace and faith, with their three renowned children, Miriam, Aaron, and Moses; but now behold, the tribe, as a whole, rises up on the Lord's side! How different from the days of Shechem! It is even as when the jailor was awakened by the Spirit, and his whole household with him. And thus Levi is

consecrated to the Lord for ever, and becomes a tribe that does nothing but serve and minister for God. (d) But again; in him we see the privileges of the new man. The Lawgiver himself (so just is it to deal bountifully with the forgiven) pronounces the ample blessing of Deuteronomy 33:8-11. He gets guidance and guides others: God guides Levi, and Levi guides Israel. As it is still in the Church; God teaches sinners by a man taken from the same pit and miry clay, from the same curse and corruption. He has fellowship with God, approaching Him with the incense, in prayer, praise, meditation, and multiform service. There is blessing on his substance, too; and he is accepted in his works (1 Corinthians 15:58): victory is before him; he is more than conqueror. (e) Once more, here are the new man's duties. Chosen, but not for any good in him beyond his brethren, he handles no more "instruments of cruelty" (Genesis 49:5), but, on the contrary it is his part now to bear the vessels of the tabernacle (Numbers 3:6-8), or, as it is expressed, "to keep the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation." They enter into God's assembly, and each has his own department of work: none is idle; for gratitude constrains them, forgiving love presses them onward. But, as in the Church still: they do not all serve in the same manner. There are three families in Levi, of whom one (Gershon) carries the tent, with its coverings and hangings; another (Kohath), the table, candlestick, and altar; and the third (Merari) the boards, bars, pillars, and sockets. So everyone serves, none envying the other, none complaining, none interfering; for God has appointed each one's sphere. They served in the desert, on its sands; they served in Zion, but at last they reached the gold-covered floor of Solomon's temple. Is not all this the history of the saints?

Besides all these teachings, Levi might furnish many other lessons. "THE LORD was his inheritance," is often repeated, telling all men where they will find enough. A true Levite's song was Psalms 16:5-6. Again; this was the tribe that furnished so many singers to the Lord's service, the Korahites, and other bands, with Heman, Ethan, Asaph, and the like. This tribe sent its representatives to David's help armed for battle (1 Chronicles 12:26-28) with twenty and two captains. Of this tribe many were the thousands who gave up for the Lord houses and lands, glebes and manses, in the days of Jeroboam (2 Chronicles 11:14). And there is something in reserve for them in the latter days, when "the sons of Zadok," descendants of Phinehas (whose zeal won special promises for his seed), shall minister in that mysterious temple spoken of by Ezekiel the prophet (Ezekiel 44:15).

How strange to find a name LEVIATHAN ("the joined serpent") resembling Levi's. But very different is their history and work. While Levi, joined to God, and joining others, is a blessing in the earth, Leviathan (Isaiah 27:1) joined in his scales, is forming confederacy and gathering together earth's kings against the Lord and his Anointed. This crocodile of Egypt was the emblem of Antichrist, that enemy of God, who, with all his violence and power as "king over the children of pride" (Job 41:1-34), seeks to disjoin men from their only Saviour. But the Lord's sword smites him (Isaiah 27:1); while Levi, who drew the sword for his Lord (Exodus 32:1-35), receives the blessing, and along with his brethren takes root again, and re-appears in holy beauties in the glory of the latter days (Isaiah 66:21).

07.04. Judah

JUDAH.

THERE is nothing sweeter than a true song of praise. Every ear listens to it, every heart is moved by it, and God Himself bends his heavens to hear. In Moses' record of a fallen world's history, the first time that "praise" occurs is in Genesis 29:35. It bursts forth from the house of Jacob and the lips of Leah, and may be said to accord well with that joyful boast of the Psalmist in after-days, when he is led to sing that it is "in the tabernacles of the righteous" you may expect to hear "the voice of rejoicing and salvation" (Psalms 118:15). It is in Jacob's tents that we first see one wearing "the garment of praise."

There had been a succession of blessings, like waves from the deep ocean, breaking at the feet of Leah; and when this fourth son was given, her exulting heart rose above its former self in gratitude. She takes up the harp; "Now"-("this time" is the literal rendering, as if she had her eye on Adam's exclamation of delight in Genesis 2:23)-"Now I will praise Jehovah!" and even as the happy mother holds the harp she turns to her new -born son and calls him " JUDAH," which may mean not simply "PRAISE," but "one for whom Jehovah is praised." Indeed, the word is most expressive, involving as it often does the idea of acknowledging and confessing. Where the being and works, the name and excellences, the heart and hand of Jehovah, are spoken of, this is praise; and thus it is used- Psalms 147:12 : "Praise" (be a Judah to) "the Lord, 0 Jerusalem." It is instructive to observe how the Lord by repeated mercies has melted Leah's heart, so that now, at any rate, if not before, her selfishness is drowned in praise. Nothing is so fitted to give a deadly blow to our selfishness at any time as real praise. Praise raises its note over buried self. Praise is sung when self is low and God high in our thoughts; and at such times, burdens roll off into Christ's sepulchre. It is at such times that heavenly work is done by men.

Such was JUDAH'S beginning; like earth's foundations, laid amid the songs of the morning stars (Job 38:7). And if Judah himself did not very remarkably call forth praise in after-days, his posterity surely inherited this blessing-the sons of him over whom praise was offered became men of note Jacob on his deathbed foretells (Genesis 49:8-12), with reference to the name, and perhaps hinting at the sad feelings of his heart previously in speaking of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi-

"Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise;" not only thy mother's sons, but "thy father's sons" also: the children of Rachel, and Zilpah, and Bilhah shall all "bow down to thee." And there shall be good reason why thou shouldest be thus honoured and praised; or "Judah is a lion's whelp," one who shall early show that he is to command others. And did not this soon appear in Judah taking the lead in the desert march, and in going up foremost after Joshua's death to take possession ? But "the young lion" grew, and became indisputably terrible to foes. Jacob sees him arrived at pre-eminence, anticipating the time when the historian of the past should write, "Judah prevailed over his brethren, and of him came the Chief Ruler" (1 Chronicles 5:2); and so he continues his delineation of that career which was to entitle him to the name JUDAH.

"From the prey, my son, thou hast gone up!" Is not this the reign of David specially, when every nation round felt the tremendous power of Judah's King, when David prospered whithersoever he went, and when he dedicated of the "spoils won in battles" (1 Chronicles 26:27), an immense amount, for the Lord's use? But see, says Jacob again- "He has lain down; he has couched like a lion! And like a lioness, who shall rouse him up?" A lioness is peculiarly fierce if her cubs be threatened. All this imagery sets before us the days when Solomon was King of Judah and Israel, quietly seated on his throne, honoured and feared by all the nations, none daring to do wrong to one of his happy subjects. It was then that Judah was at the height of his pre-eminence, the praise of all lands. After that period, nevertheless, he still held the high place assigned him; for did not all the noblest and best of the kings spring from Judah's soil? and the most renowned of the prophets? and all the sweet singers whose psalms and songs have been handed down to us? Judah retained dominion too. "The lion" was still his emblem; and looking on through long centuries, Jacob was inspired to sing of this feature also in Judah's history- "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, Nor the lawgiver (a ruler's staff) from between his feet, Till SHILOH come, and the notions be gathered to Him."

Judah held his place as a kingdom till Messiah was born, growing up unnoticed "as a tender plant;" for SHILOH is no other than Messiah, the name signifying "One who has peace," or rest, or security. Messiah had rest and peace in Himself, and came to give it to others: "My peace I give unto you" (John 14:27). And this name given to Him here corresponds very much with "SOLOMON"; the man who "has peace," and who makes others share it. In all probability, it was in reference to this name of Messiah, that the ark was so long kept at Shiloh, the town of Ephraim that bore the same signification. In due time, Messiah, long expected (but whose peace was not found at the town Shiloh, nor in the days of Solomon), did come; and ever since He came, "the nations," not the tribes of Israel only, have been gathering round Him, and giving willing obedience to Him. From year to year, Shiloh has been gathering willing subjects, and shall never cease till He has gathered all nations as well as all Israel (Psalms 102:22). There may be an allusion to the fact that for a time Jerusalem, was to be the resort of all true worshippers; but only till Shiloh should come (John 4:21-23).

O Judah! what praise belongs to thee! What honour! Divine sovereignty has given thee the birthright pre- eminence. Well may thy brethren in all the earth join with thy "father's sons," in almost envious gratulation. Thou art he who wert honoured to give birth to Messiah, the King of kings, the Prince of Peace, the Saviour of sinners, the blessed and only Redeemer of the lost sons of men! All eternity shall remember thee. On account of all this honour, and because of all that his possessions in the land yielded him, Judah was yet further spoken of by Jacob as a tribe abounding in blessing. At this day the inhabitants of Lebanon, when at vintage season they have stript off the rich clusters of grapes, and thrust them into the wine-vats, tie to the vines the asses that have been helping them, letting them eat the leaves and branches as they please. In allusion to this very ancient custom, which spoke of vintage satisfactorily gathered in, and hinted at the gatherers having gone away to the wine-vats, there to tread out the grapes, Jacob describes Judah's plenty of all good things "Binding his ass to the vine, and his ass's colt to the choice vine," etc., enjoying all that might make the eye sparkle and the face flush with ruddy glow, while also they had their full share of the land "flowing with milk." Think of Eshcol and Hebron, with hills terraced to the top with vines. Think of plains and valleys covered with cattle and goats. It would

be easy to enlarge, but our limits forbid us to dwell on this feature of Judah's praise. We might add also that Shiloh the Prince of Peace, being a man of Judah as to his humanity, might be shown to embody in Himself all the leading features of the tribe; praised-a man of might, the lion of the, tribe, and yet the peaceful one (Friedreich), introducing the gathered people into an inheritance flowing with milk and honey, an: inheritance better than Canaan. In the blessing of Moses (Deuteronomy 33:7), there is, at first sight, an apparently intentional ignoring of the name of Judah in reference to praise. It is of prayer we hear him speak:- "Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah!" But this also is part of Judah's pre-eminence. Yes, he is remarkable above others for prayer. Was his first father so? Was not Judah that brother of Joseph who pleaded with his brethren (Genesis 37:26-27), and then so pathetically interceded with Joseph himself? (Genesis 44:18-34). That voice touched Joseph's heart; and in after-days, the heart of Jehovah was touched by descendants of this same Judah, who were mighty in prayer. Such was Jabez; such was David; such was Solomon; such was Asa; and such was Hezekiah; not to mention more of the Lord's famous remembrancers. And in Judah, above all, stood The Temple, to which the chief allusion may be made here; for it was "The house of prayer," from which ascended supplication continually from the days of Solomon's prayer down to the days of the publican who cried, "0 God, be merciful to me a sinner!" No wonder Moses selected, by the Spirit's guidance, this feature of Judah's tribe.

We might further notice that it is Judah who has given name to the whole nation. They are "JEWS;" that is, Judahites; because the tribe of Judah remained at Jerusalem, when the ten tribes went into captivity and disappeared from view. And so again, O Judah, thy brethren and the nations praise thee! But listen to one who loved thee truly-Paul who sat once at the feet of Gamaliel in Jerusalem; listen to him reminding thee: "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Romans 2:29). Come and join us in adoring Shiloh, greater than all the mighty kings, the true "Men of the tribe of Judah" (Revelation 5:5), and of David's line. He rests at the Father's right hand. Come and praise Him, for He has shed the true glory over thy tribe. He is the true Judah; praised by his innumerable saved ones to all eternity, to whom He gives far better than the wine and milk of your famed Judea. 0 Judah, the Gentiles love thee for Shiloh's sake; for He was thy brother, while He was also thy Lord, David's Son and David's Lord. We love thee, and all thy brethren; and we sing in our dwellings songs that breathe out our longings for the day when thou shalt again be a "name and a praise among all people of the earth" (Zephaniah 3:20), when "Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation" (Joel 3:20).

"When the fair year Of your Deliverer comes, And that long frost, which now benumbs Your hearts, shall thaw; when angels here Shall yet to man appear, And familiarly confer Beneath the oak and juniper.

"When the bright Dove, Which now these many, many springs Hath kept above, shall with spread wings.

Descend, and living waters flow To make dry dust and dead trees grow.

"Oh, then, that I Might live, and see that olive-tree Bearing her proper branches! which now lie Scattered each where, And without root and sap decay, Cast of the husbandman away.

"And sure it is not far;

For, as your first and foul decays Forerunning the bright Morning Star, Did sadly note his healing rays Would shine elsewhere, since you were blind; And would be cross when God was kind;

"So, by all signs, Our fulness, too, is now come in, And the same sun, which here declines. And sets, will few hours hence begin To rise on you again, and look Toward old Mamre and Eshcol's brook.

"For surely He Who loved the world so as to give His only Son to make it free- Whose Spirit, too, doth mourn and grieve To see man lost-will, for old love, From your dark hearts this veil remove.

"Faith sojourned first on earth with you, You were the dear and chosen flock;. The arm of God, glorious and true, Was first revealed to be your Rock.

You were the eldest child, and when: Your stony hearts despised love, The youngest, e'en the Gentiles, then Were cheered, your jealousy to move.

"Thus, righteous Father, dost thou deal With brutish men! Thy gifts go round, By turns and timely, and so heal The lost son by the newly found."

VAUGHAN.

07.05. Dan

DAN. FROM time to time, during the long sojourn in Egypt, the blessings which Jacob pronounced on his deathbed would be spoken of, sung of at the brick-kiln, and then on the parched soil of the desert, taught to their children, and kept in memory as pledges of future good. Who can tell how often the bondmen encouraged each other under the blows of the taskmaster, with the prophecy that Shiloh should yet arise, and Judah yet be the mighty lion? But to teach them, when they had reached Canaan and its happy seats, not to rest as if they had found all that the soul could win, the patriarch Jacob, while in spirit in the midst of these future scenes, is heard breathing out his longing desire for more than his words have described. Pausing after his glowing delineation of Judah’s lot, and his stirring sketch of the prowess of Dan, he is led by the inspiring Spirit to exclaim (Genesis 49:18)-"I have waited for thy salvation, O Jehovah," as if he had said, "All that development of greatness and power in Israel is not enough. Oh that the salvation of Israel were come!" It was the first of a long succession of similar bursts of desire which used to find utterance when gleams of the glorious Saviour touched the chords of the believing heart. In the days of David we hear the worshipper cry, "My soul fainteth for thy salvation;" "Mine eyes fail for thy salvation;" "I have hoped for thy salvation, 0 Lord;" "I have longed for thy salvation, 0 Lord" (Psalms 119:81, Psalms 119:123, Psalms 119:166, Psalms 119:174). Isaiah cries, "Say to Zion, Behold thy salvation cometh" (Psalms 62:11), as if Zion were impatient with long expecting. Old Simeon exclaims at last, "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation." (Luke 2:30), when at Christ’s first coming he held "The Child born to us" in his arms. And the whole Church shall soon raise the joyous cry, at his second coming," Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us" (Isaiah 25:9).

"I know that my Redeemer lives, He lives, and on the earth shall stand; And though to worms my flesh He gives, My dust lies numbered in his hand.

"In this reanimated clay I surely shall behold Him near; Shall see Him in the latter day In all his majesty appear.

"I feel what then shall raise me up- The Eternal Spirit lives in me. This is my confidence of hope That God I bee to face shall see.

‘Mine own, and not another’s eyes, The King shall in his beauty view.

I shall from Him receive the prize, The starry crown to victors due."

C. WESLEY. But we have somewhat anticipated. Let us go farther back than to Jacob’s blessing, let us go back to the birth-time of Dan, as recorded in Genesis 30:1-6.

Man’s heart has been called a microcosm and a family is a miniature world. What we find in Jacob’s house exhibits very correctly the state of the world at large. All things in Jacob’s house seem out of order, envy, discontent, murmuring abound on one side, pride and the vauntings of rivalry prevail on the other. Rachel is against Leah, and Leah is against Rachel. Jacob cannot

rectify the disorder; but at length Rachel hints that she has hit upon a plan which may adjust matters. She suggests that her handmaid Bilhah may have children by Jacob, and she will adopt her handmaid's children. It is a plan such as only the unsatisfactory relations of polygamy would have admitted; but Rachel prayed over it (she says, "God hath heard me." Genesis 30:6), and the Lord made use of it. A son was born to Bilhah accordingly; and while Rachel adopted the child, and held him up as her own, she exclaimed, "God hath judged me, and hath given me a son;" and so his name was called "Dan," judging. Now this term, "judge" (which in Hebrew may be expressed by two verbs indiscriminately, ***** or *****), is one that includes much. It is, indeed, properly the expression for managing and ruling; putting in order things that were all confusion, or that threatened to cause distress. And so God is "the widow's Judge" (Psalms 68:5) when He manages her affairs for her in her helplessness; and He comes to "judge the earth," as Gideon, Samson, Samuel judged and ruled Israel. It was this rectifying and adjusting of affairs in Jacob's house that Rachel referred to when she uttered the exulting words, "God hath judged me!" The storm of passion is quieted; the boasts and vaunts of rivals are stilled; order begins to reign in the tents of Israel, as well as in Rachel's distracted heart. In bitterness of soul and rash rebelliousness of feeling, she had said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die;" the Lord had heard her, too, but He had also heard her bemoaning the sin, and crying to Him to overrule all. And the Lord did overrule, for "He judged." Even as He shall do in reply to the prayers of his elect, who cry day and night to Him, "Avenge me of mine adversary" (Luke 18:7). Men have, like Rachel, strange plans of their own for putting right a disordered world; but the Lord will overrule all. In after days, Jacob foretold regarding Dan, with a reference to his name and the circumstance of his birth- "Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel."

He shall have his turn in judging Israel. And as he at his birth brought about a temporary cessation of strife and envy, so, when he shall have become a tribe, he shall be found performing a similar service. All this came to pass when Samson was raised up from this tribe at a critical period of the nation's history, to be to the whole land a deliverer and ruler. Not only did Samson for twenty years clear Israel's troubled sky, but he left his impress on the nation, who saw in him what might their God was able to communicate, so that truly one could chase a thousand. He caused the nations round, also, to know the same, and to stand in awe. But again, when he shall judge Israel, he shall do it in a peculiar manner.

"Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, That biteth the horse-heels, so that the rider falleth backward." In marching through the desert, Dan brought up the rear of the camp, and may often have driven back the retreating foe. But the special allusion here is to Samson again; for like the serpent and the adder, see him suddenly, abruptly, and by most startling strokes, assailing the Philistines from time to time. Yet more, Jacob may refer to the Danites, in characteristic suddenness and force, coming down upon the city Laish. These at any rate are outstanding facts regarding this tribe, related by the sacred historian in a way that may lead us to suppose that, on other occasions besides, Dan exhibited a similar peculiarity of temperament and character. But further, let us note, Dan, in all these deeds, was adjusting the balance, or "judging;" for even the affair of Laish was suggested by the tribe finding itself over-crowded, and by something of Rachel's desire to equal their rivals in prowess and possessions.

It may be because of the singularity of the description, "A serpent-an adder," that there arose a whisper among the Jews and the early Christians, that Antichrist should spring from the tribe of

Dan-Antichrist: that serpent, that adder, and yet mighty ruler. Some of the fathers thought their opinion confirmed by the fact that Dan set up the graven image of Micah (Judges 18:31), and also by the omission of the name of Dan in Revelation 7:1-17. But for that omission sufficient reasons of another kind can be given; and when we turn to Moses' blessing, in Deuteronomy 32:22, there is no hint of evil having its peculiar source in Dan. Moses omits Simeon, but he mentions and blesses Dan- "Dan is like a lion's whelp, that is wont to leap from Basham."

He is never to be like Judah-a full-grown lion and lioness; he is to be "a young lion," making efforts at great deeds; and specially like the young lion in his daring leaps. It was in conformity with this trait in his character that he sent out his warriors from the south, where his lot seemed fixed, to the far north, leaping at once from the one end to the other end of the land. While adjusting affairs in his own tribe, he does unlooked-for things on the foe-coming on Laish all suddenly and irresistibly. Shall not the Judge of the earth do the same? Shall He not come all suddenly, as the leap of a lion's whelp, upon an unthinking world, when they are saying, "Peace and safety"?

There is a most interesting variety in the Lord's people; the Lord's tribes have each a characteristic of their own. Cephas is not Apollos, nor is either of them a Paul. There is variety in their gifts, and graces in their lot and in the results of their assigned work. Often the Lord uses a man for some one great and important purpose, and then the man disappears from view. Micaiah announces Ahab's doom; Daniel's three companions pass unscathed through the furnace; Joseph of Arimathea takes down the body of Jesus from the cross; and no more is heard of these men of God. So the tribe of Dan performs two great exploits, or rather comes twice into bold prominence, and then disappears. In 1 Chronicles, while the other tribes have a place and mention in the catalogues of genealogy, Dan has none at all. So also Dan has one famous city, Joppa, but only this on that can be spoken of as renowned. This is the Lord's way, judging as He sees best, managing and ruling according to his will among the inhabitants of the earth.

One other fact about Dan. The architect of the Temple of Solomon was the son of a Tyrian; but his mother was of the tribe of Dan (2 Chronicles 2:14): "a woman of the daughters of Dan," who had married a Gentile proselyte, but was soon left a widow. How, then, is this woman said to be "of the tribe of Naphtali," in 1 Kings 7:14? Because, she being born in that part of Dan which is in the north, and probably in the town called Dan, or Laish, had passed over to the adjoining tribe of Naphtali; and probably while residing there had met with a man of Tyre. In her widowhood, the Lord comforted her by giving her son singular talents, and sending him to stand before kings, and, better still, to direct the building of the house of the Lord. Was not the "Lord judging the widow," managing her case kindly and well? And was He not teaching us that Gentiles were to come to the light of the Lord, and build his true temple along with Israel? Yes, Dan (true to his name and early history) suggests the right adjustment of the jealousy and envy, the boastings and the rivalry of Israel and the Gentiles; for as in purchasing the site for it, a Gentile, Ornan, had his part to act: so Jew and Gentile both are thus represented in building the Lord's house.

07.06. Naphtali

NAPHTALI.

SOME theologians doubt whether or not the expression often used among us, "Wrestling with God in prayer," conveys a really Scriptural idea. It seems to imply that the person who wrestles believes that something like unwillingness in God to give the request, or at least that his will needs to be wrought upon by great efforts of ours before He will consent to bestow the coveted gifts. Now, where the blessing is truly fitted to help and benefit us, there never is any unwillingness in God to give; and where it is not so, no wrestling of ours, no efforts, no crying and tears, shall ever bring God to consent to bestow it. On this account, the expression needs to be explained; but it is a mistake to say that it is altogether unscriptural. In Colossians 2:1, Paul tells of his earnest prayers for the growth in grace of those of whom he speaks, and calls them "*****" * conflict, and Colossians 4:12, Epaphras is represented as "*******," conflicting like a wrestler in prayer to God in behalf of the Colossians. However, when we use it, let us clearly understand what we mean. We may use it surely since Paul did so. We use it not to imply that God is unwilling, or that if we insist in it sufficiently, He will yield to us even though He had purposed otherwise; but to express the truth that there are many blessings which He gives only after much waiting on Him on our part. In short, importunity in prayer comes up to the true idea of wrestling in prayer, when it is such wrestling as that of Paul and Epaphras. And if one asks, why does the Lord in some cases wish us to employ importunity, and why does He not give the blessing till He has been urgently and repeatedly besought to do it? The answer is obvious. Such waiting on the Lord as is implied in importunity, is fitted to empty us of self, and the longer it is continued may complete the discovery and deepen in us the conviction of our own worthlessness, and thus to fix our confidence altogether on the Lord’s own grace. We really wrestle against our own fancied worthiness. This is a most humbling position; altogether unlike the other sort of wrestling (usually so called) which would convey the idea that the person who so prays has something of his own, has strength, has grace, has earnestness, which all may conduce to his being heard at last. Many have cherished this delusion, whereas it is only when we have wrestled against, and been emptied of, any such idea, left convinced of utter unworthiness, and brought to expect to be heard simply on account of the Lord’s own gracious heart, that we prevail. Jacob’s case (Genesis 32:25) illustrates the whole matter. There you find the angel wrestling with Jacob, letting him for a time put forth what strength he had, till at last, in order to convince him of his real inherent powerlessness and wormlike worthlessness, he touches him and puts his thigh out of joint. Upon this, as we learn from Hosea 12:4, Jacob, reduced to weakness, and probably agonizing in pain, seems to have fallen on the Angel’s neck, weeping and praying (for he had discovered his divine nature), and insisting that he should not go from him till he had blessed him. It was at this second stage that Jacob prevailed; for now the appeal was altogether to the grace and love of Him with whom he had to do. It was only now that Jacob had become a truly Scriptural wrestler, a wrestler like Paul and Epaphras in after times.

* It may be rendered more generally "striving" or "contesting," as in the public games; but Plato is in the habit of using the noun, *****, specially for gymnastic exercise or wrestling. Either way, the violent exertion and effort is expressed. And see Colossians 1:29.

We are come to the history of Naphtali, whose name speaks of "wrestling," and this has led us to preface our inquiries by the above remarks. For there is some difference of opinion as to what Rachel's words signify in Genesis 30:7-8 : "Bilhah bare Jacob a second son; and Rachel said, With wrestlings of God have I wrestled with my sister, and have prevailed. And she called his name Naphtali; "Hengestenberg and Delitsch maintain her meaning to be, that she had wrestled for mercy in prayer, to get God to deal with her as He had dealt with Leah; and old Onkelas in the Targum, makes her say, "The Lord has accepted my prayer when I did earnestly supplicate that I might have a child like my sister." It is against her sister she has directed her prayer; that her boasting over her might be silenced; and this she calls, "Wrestling with God against her sister," for our version, "great wrestlings" does not express the original. And so we may understand Naphtali's name as nearly equivalent to "one won by prayer." Rachel, like the woman of Syrophcenicia in after days, when apparently frowned upon, continued still to try the hidden depths of God's mercy. She was persevering and importunate in prayer, calling upon Him on the ground of his infinite grace; while her sister Leah, satisfied with the past, made no such appeal to Jehovah. And thus it was that Rachel prevailed, and Naphtali was born,* the fruit of prayer-agonizing, wrestling, Epaphras-like prayer.

* Leah speaks of Jehovah, and Rachel of God (Elohim). Probably Rachel felt as if the Lord's treatment of her stood in the way of her claiming the blessing from Him on any other ground than that He was able to do this thing, able as Elohim, even if not engaged to do it as Jehovah.

It is a mistake to insist that there is necessarily something like unbelief in such wrestling prayer, for it does not at all imply trust in our own efforts, or distrust of God's good will. On the contrary, it is called forth by a fact regarding God's ways, which He has made known to us, and which the believing soul acquiesces in-viz., that He has delight in our continued prayers, and would have us to be constant suitors at his gate, and that therefore He has arranged as to some of his gifts, not to give them at a first or second asking, but only after we have continued perseveringly to ask. "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:21). Jesus "was all night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12); and then obtained that quiverful of apostles. Elijah prays on and on till the seventh time ere the rain-cloud appears. Rachel needed only to pray for Dan, but she must wrestle for Naphtali; and even then the full gain of her prayers did not appear. Ofttimes it is after we are in our graves that the result of our prayers comes full into view.

I. But we proceed. The gift won by prayer may be expected to be somewhat notable. What, then, have we to say of Naphtali's career as a tribe? We have dying Jacob's blessing on him, Genesis 49:21 - "Naphtali is a hind let loose:

He giveth goodly words;" others read it- "Naphtali is a spreading terebinth;

He putteth forth boughs of beauty."

Whatever be determined as to the exact rendering of the Hebrew words in this blessing, it is clear that Jacob predicts that Naphtali is to be remarkable for some kind of beauty. Preferring the common rendering, we find that the grace and beauty of the hind, as it bounds along "with airy

step and glorious eye," is Naphtali's emblem. Now, this might well apply to the portion he inherited, for his lot fell in a region abounding in graceful and romantic scenery, where the "hind let loose," the gazelle in its beauty, might be seen at every step, literally and figuratively. In his tribe are "alluvial plains, long undulating ridges, and gracefully-rounded hill-tops, clothed with evergreen, oak, and terebinth; thickets, too, of aromatic shrubs, and lawns of verdant turf. There are glens, densely wooded, with streams murmuring among the rocks, and glaring with oleander flowers, away down in shady beds. The air is filled with melody-the song of birds, and the music of the forest, as the wind sweeps its chords" (Dr. Porter). And then as to the next clause- "He uttereth words of beauty"- it has been suggested that they refer to the natural effect of such scenery in stirring up the soul to speak gracefully, if they do not express generally the fact that Naphtali's happy lot, by its rich scenery and verdurous landscapes, may be said to have been ever calling forth the eulogies of passers by. If, however, we go further, and inquire for the illustration of this blessing in the history and deeds of the tribe, there is nothing recorded bearing on this point except the memorable story of Barak and Deborah, the judge and the prophetess. Yet why should we not suppose an allusion to these illustrious leaders of the tribe, even as in the case of Dan the allusion was so pointedly to Samson? Barak goes forth with his ton thousand, like the hind let loose, and gains his high places (Psalms 18:33; Habakkuk 3:19); while Deborah pours forth "words of beauty" in her song. "The hind" was on its "high places" as the prophetess sings (Judges 5:18), and may be said ever after to have stood there, in view of Israel. Individual minds leave their impress on a generation, and on a region too. Barak and Deborah are the representatives of Naphtali. Nor should we forget that it was here Messiah first went forth, preaching the glad tidings, "giving goodly words." Some of his most "gracious words" were spoken here, and six at least of his apostles seem to have been from this tribe.

II. But Rachel's gift won by prayer is celebrated by Moses also in Deuteronomy 33:23 - "0 Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full of the blessing of the Lord, Possess thou the sea, and the south."

"The thousand captains," with their 37,000 men, each carrying shield and spear, who joined persecuted David (1 Chronicles 12:34), attest the blessing which had rested on the population of their region. And then as to the region itself, some understand the latter clause to mean that "Naphtali shall possess a lot which should combine the advantages of the healthy sea-breeze with the grateful warmth of the south" (Keil). But, more definitely, we may remark that this tribe possessed at once some of the most delightful valleys of Anti-Lebanon (where "favour and fulness of blessing" rested beyond dispute), and at the same time the fertile slopes which close in the Sea of Galilee. On the south of his portion a part of this sea lies; so that when Jesus walked on its shores, the prophet in vision, and the evangelist in after days, exclaimed- "The land of Naphtali, the way of the sea! The people that sat in darkness saw great light." (Isaiah 9:1-2; Matthew 4:15-16) In the plain of Gennesareth, which Josephus calls a very paradise for beauty and delight, and where was concentrated all that might set forth Naphtali as "satisfied with favour, and full of the blessing of the Lord," Messiah delighted to sound his jubilee-trumpet of deliverance, and utter his "goodly words" of light and life. His parables were spoken there, and many of his most gracious words, such as that everlastingly memorable invitation- "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, And I will give you rest."

Bethsaida and Capernaum were towns of Naphtali, in whose every street might he found some memorial of his mighty works, or some echo of his gracious words.

Even at this time, the traveller climbs the range of hills in this tribe, called "Mount Naphtali," and finds every height well wooded, and often fragrant with the myrtle and aromatic shrubs, with corn-fields at their base. Or he turns aside to the site of the old city of refuge, Kedesh-Naphtali, now called Kedes, and finds its ruins beside a modern village on a knoll, which rises up from a green vale, with herbage-clad hills beyond, and rich olive-groves close at hand. These are relics of the "favour and blessing" which the Lord once caused to rest here, when this tribe was like "the gazelle let loose," or "the spreading terebinth." It was when Israel turned to idols that the scene changed, and this tribe was the very first carried captive to Assyria (2 Kings 15:29), its inhabitants swept away to the far-off region where now the Nestorians are found keeping up traditions of the past. Perhaps it is no stretch of fancy to say that, just because this tribe was thus the first to suffer under the stroke of wrath, Messiah, when He came (in the wondrous love and grace that marked all his ways) selected their borders as the scene of his earliest public ministrations. Some of his first and sweetest calls rang through Naphtali's groves and glades, and were echoed by his mountains. But they "received Him not;" and thus they confirmed their doom.

III. Such, then, was Naphtali. Such were the after-fruits of Rachel's wrestlings. It is no vain thing to take hold on God's name and plead importunately. The fruit of such wrestling prayer is, both present and future blessing. Saints under the New Testament have learnt this secret, betaking themselves to such wrestlings of faith, when they would go forth "satisfied with favour, and full of the blessing of the Lord," "like hinds let loose, giving goodly words." One man of prayer, when sent for by his bitter persecutors, in order to be conducted to a prison, calmly replied, "I know not whither you are sending me, but my heart is as full of comfort as it can hold;" and another man of prayer, as he is about to close his eyes in death, cries aloud, "I am full of the consolations of Christ!" All this they possess through Jesus Messiah, accepted and rested in as theirs. We inherit more than Naphtali's portion, when we welcome Messiah, whose "goodly words" were uttered so often in Naphtali's cities-Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. Nor, on the other hand, is it ever to be forgotten how these once famous cities were brought low-"brought down to hell." The Lord Jesus came to them with all his saving grace. He would have gathered him under his wing, and "they would not." What then? Rejecting Messiah, a blight passed over them, a withering blight, and soon were they dispossessed of their pleasant portion, and lost at once the temporal and the spiritual riches that were within their reach. And has not all Israel lost "the pleasant land" by the same unbelief? Why are "few men left" in your land, 0 Israel? Why are your "cities without inhabitants?" (Isaiah 6:11-12; Isaiah 24:6). Your house is left unto you desolate, because you will not say, "Blessed is he that has come in the name of the Lord," for so Messiah has spoken (Matthew 23:39).

Chapter 92

07.07. Orders of the Twelve Tribes

WE have been taking up the history of the tribes in the order of their first father’s birth. But it is curious to observe in what great variety of order their names are giver in other places, as if the Lord would show impartial regard to each tribe, by putting one in the place of the other from time to time. We have the following varieties, twenty-one in all:- The order of their birth (Genesis 29:1-35, Genesis 30:1-43, and Genesis 35:1-28) Enumeration of Dan at Mamre (Genesis 35:23-26).

Enumeration of Dan on going down to Egypt (Genesis 46:8-19).

Enumeration of Dan in Jacob’s blessing (Genesis 49:1-33) Enumeration of Dan when the heads of tribes are named (Numbers 1:5-15).

Enumeration of Dan when the males above twenty years are named (Numbers 1:20-43). The order in which they pitched round the Tabernacle (Numbers 2:1-34) The order in which the princes offered (Numbers 7:1-89) The order in which thy marched (Numbers 10:1-36) The order in which spies from each tribe were selected (Numbers 13:1-33) The order in which they were numbered in the plains of Moab (Numbers 26:1-65) The order in which the princes who were to divide the land were appointed (Numbers 34:1-29) The order in which they stood on Ebal and Gerizim (Deuteronomy 27:1-26) The order in which they were blessed by Moses (Deuteronomy 33:1-29) The order in which the lot was cast for each (Joshua 13:1-33, Joshua 14:1-15) The order in which the lot fell for the Levitical cities out of each (Joshua 21:4-8). The order in which the names of these cities for each are given (Joshua 21:9-39). The order in which the same are given in the 1st Book of Chronicles (1 Chronicles 6:55-81). The order in which their future portion in the Lord is given (Ezekiel 48:2-28). The order in which the gates of the city that bear their names occur (Ezekiel 48:31-34). The order in which the twelve thousand scaled ones from each tribe are given (Revelation 7:1-17)

Sometimes reasons may be assigned for the special orders adopted; at other times we can see none. In the new division of the land in Ezekiel 48:1-35, Gad (the tribe we now come to speak of) is placed in the far south of Palestine, reaching to Kadesh-barnea. In Revelation 7:5, Gad stands third in order. The birth of the father of this tribe is related in Genesis 30:9-11. Leah seeing the success of her sister’s plan, and feeling herself neglected, adopts that very plan, and by her handmaid Zilpah gives Jacob another son. Her words on hearing of the birth of this son, have boon interpreted by some as simply meaning, "Good luck!" an exclamation of delight and satisfaction; but the better interpretation, which both retains the Masoretic reading of the text, and accords with Jacob’s reference to the name in Genesis 49:19, renders the words, "A troop cometh!" This is the sense given in the margin of our version. Leah probably intended to exult over her sister, Genesis 9:8. You must leave the field to me again; for see! here is "A troop coming to my help." Thus understood, Gad’s name tells of defeat repaired, of conquering when all seemed lost, of clouds breaking up and sunshine returning after rain.

How often in the scenes of every day life may we hear Gad’s name. A family is threatened with disaster; gloom overspreads every countenance; disease has assailed some beloved one, and death is hovering over the dwelling; but the Lord sends relief, perhaps in the way of leading the family to adopt a remedy which some other has tried. It is blessed; and lo! "A troop cometh;" relief and recovery have come, and drive the enemy from the field. Or the family is poor, care and dismal forebodings harass them; ruin stalks on the threshold. But means of relief are suggested, and found successful; "A troop cometh!" It may be in the shape of employment given, or money sent, or friends raised up. At any rate, the clouds are dispersed, and one says to another, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness!" Nor is it less often thus in the family of God. God’s children have dreaded their subjection to indwelling sin, for corruption has lifted its head. But" A troop cometh!" and the despairing believer sings, "I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord;" or it may be a host of outward evils assail-"tribulation, persecution, nakedness, distress, famine, sword." But soon there is heard the cry, "A troop cometh!" Paul and all his fellow-believers singing-"I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39). Yes, even when Death, the last enemy, assails, this shall be the issue. With Leah’s battle-cry he shall drive him from the field. But let us see what Jacob said of his son Gad, in Genesis 49:19. He blesses him thus:- "Gad, a troop shall overcome him: But he shall overcome at the last." This may be rendered, preserving the alliteration of the original, and rendering very literally:

"The troop-tribe, a troop shall troop upon him; but he shall trop upon the heel."

He shall be a tribe much engaged in conflicts, and fitted for such warfare; so that he shall be found "trooping upon the heel," putting to flight and pursuing his foe. As a tribe, his geographical situation exposed him to invasion from many quarters, such as Moab, Ammon, and the sons of Ishmael; but for this warfare he shall be fitted. Accordingly, we find not only Bani, a Gadite, one of David’s mighty men (2 Samuel 23:36), and even Levites, residing in it, "mighty men of valour" (1 Chronicles 26:31), but a great band, who are described as "men of might, men of the host fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions" (compare Deuteronomy 33:20), and who "were as the roes upon the mountains in speed" (1 Chronicles 12:8). And then, along with Reubenites and Manassehites, they of God came, "with all manner of instruments of war for the battle" (1 Chronicles 12:37), forming a band of 120,000 men. We suppose, too, that the incident in 1 Chronicles 5:18-22, where they join with Reuben and Manasseh against the Hagarites, and Jetur, and Nephish, and Nodab, is but one of a hundred similar expeditions. Out go the troops, all of them "sons of valour," with buckler, sword, and bow, and dash upon the foe; but for a time the Hagarites and their allies "troop upon them" bravely, till "they cry to God in the battle, and He is entreated of them; because they put their trust in Him." Then God and his allies "troop upon the heel" of the fleeing foe, taking 100,000 captives, and immense booty. Nor is it unworthy of notice, that in these instances Gad comes on the field to help others, as his father may be said to have done when Leah cried, "A troop cometh." The same characteristic will again appear in what is said of him in the blessing of Moses (Deuteronomy 33:20-21). The Lord directed that Gad should receive a broad territory, the conquered kingdom of Sihon, where he might have ample room for development eastward, when his warlike propensities should impel him. T o this, "blessed be he that entreateth God" has reference; while Gad is

described as a "lion" or "lioness, lying down," after tearing "the arm lifted up to defend the crown of the head." Then it is added:

"And he looked out for himself the first fruit," for he got his settlement among the very first of the tribes, thus acquiring what might be called "the first fruit portion." Yet there was no selfishness in this settlement, and therefore "blessed be He that gave him that ample portion."

"For , though ensconced, there, in a territory assigned him by the Lawgiver, He came (to join) the heads of the people; In fellowship with Israel, To execute the justice of the Lord, and his judgements." The reference here is to the memorable fact that Gad, along with Reuben and half-Manasseh, passed over Jordan with the other tribes, and took part with them in all their wars with the Canaanites. In this, Gad seems to have taken the lead very characteristically, for is it not as at his father's birth, "A troop cometh" to aid in clearing the field and seeming triumph?

Jephthah was of this tribe, and in his own person certainly it might be said again, "A troop cometh," when he so triumphantly drove out the Ammonites, overcoming those who had overcome so long. Jephthah was a man of Gilead, and Gilead belonged to Gad. 'To Gad, also, belonged several places associated with remarkable events, Jabesh-Gilead, Ramoth-Gilead, Peniel, Mahanaim; but none more renowned than Mount Gilead, the hill of balsam-trees, the spot where Jacob and Laban made their covenant (perhaps under the shade of one of these groves) calling the spot "Galeed," the heap of witness. It has still traces of its former romantic beauty, but no one ever finds the balsam-tree. It has disappeared from Gilead, as it has from the valley of Jericho. This tribe, warlike as it was, no sooner joined in the idolatries of Israel than it felt itself powerless against Jehovah's anger. It was one of the first portions of Israel's land that fell under the power of Tiglath-pileser, who eventually carried away the inhabitants into captivity. The modern Nestorians are in part descended from Gad, for comparing 2 Kings 15:29 with 1 Chronicles 5:26, we find the region of Gilead was carried to the far-off mountains and rivers of Media and Persia, there described. Yes, Gilead, the very heart of Gad, was torn out of him, and left to the mercy of strangers, because Jehovah had been forsaken, and his covenant-grace rejected.

"Bless'd tribe of Gad, when Israel's sick, Sought by physician's skill, And found the balm which healed their wounds On fragrant Gilead-hill, "Troops of disease assailed thee then; To scale thy heights they passed; But Gilead's balm gave health to all.

Gad overcame at last.'

"Now all in vain seek we for cure, O Gilead, on thy brow; For Him whose grace was Gilead's balm Thy nation hateth now.

"Not even the types or health and joy Within thy land remain; The thorn and thistle have o'erspread The mountain and the plain.

"Messiah, He is Gilead's balm, He poured for man his blood.

O Tribes or Israel, welcome Him, Welcome the Christ of God.

"Long have thy roes, troop upon troop, Their chains around thee cast; But welcome Him, and thou art free!

’Gad overcomes at last.’ "

ANON.

07.08. Asher

ASHER.

IT is a peculiarity of Hebrew names that they almost always express the feelings, or refer to the circumstances, of the parent at the time of the child’s birth. In Leah’s case there was a good deal that spoke of her dependence on the Lord in the earlier part of her family life; there is little of this looking up to God to be found afterwards. Her handmaid Zilpah (Genesis 30:12-13) bears another son, and Leah expresses her joy, exclaiming, "This is among my happy things," or, "Happy am I, for the daughters will congratulate me on my good fortune." And thus it was that this son got the name "Asher," the Happy One. His blessing in Genesis 49:20, corresponds with his name at birth, still speaking of felicity- "Out of Asher cometh fatness as his bread, And he giveth royal dainties."

He received a very fruitful soil for his lot; the lowlands of Carmel, abounding in olive oil and wheat, "bread and fatness." Some think that it was Asher’s territory that furnished the "twenty thousand measures of wheat" that were sent to Hiram by Solomon (1 Kings 5:11). His vicinity to Tyre and Zidon enabled him to bring in royal luxuries ("a king’s delights") from these princely cities, and to distribute them among the tribes; this may be meant by his "giving." His territory was a narrow strip of land comparatively, but all the more remarkable is its abundance, tempting his people to indolent enjoyment, as Deborah complained in her song- "Asher continued on the seashore, And abode in his creeks" (Judges 5:17). His happy lot, so far as the produce of the soil went, is again celebrated in the last words of Moses (Deuteronomy 33:24-25)- "Asher is blessed above the sons (i. e., peculiarly blessed among the other sons of Jacob), Favoured among his brethren, And he dips his foot in oil." The Plain of Acre (or Accho) was his; a plain the weeds of which at this day are the richest and rankest in all Palestine, and its crops most luxuriant, on account of the moisture of the soil. Thus was he peculiarly favoured. Then oil, emblematic of richness and fatness, is referred to with special appropriateness, because Asher’s hills were not clothed with the vines that enriched Judah, but were planted with the olive-tree; every slope presenting a grove of vigorous olives to the view of the passer by.

"Thy shoes (or, thy bolts, or castles) shall be iron and brass, And thy languid rest shall be as thy days."

Bolted in, as it were, by his hills (hills that produced iron and copper, and may have at early periods helped to supply Zidon, which Homer calls "******* "), this tribe was not to be distinguished in war, but so long as it continued to be a tribe was to be noted only for this plenty of bread. This "languid rest" (as the word is generally understood to mean) was to be a feature of Asher to the last; and that it was so very early we have proof in the passage quoted from Deborah’s song. It may further be, noticed that Asher’s "warrior’s shoes," or "strong-barred fortresses," which seem to signify his mountains, were his protection against the men of Tyre and Zidon (Joshua 19:28-29), who remained unsubdued even in Solomon’s days, and must often have threatened to disturb this tribe’s repose. A sort of restful contentedness, we have seen, was a feature of this tribe. Its one noble deed was that mentioned in 1 Chronicles 12:36, when it sent forth its forty thousand

warriors, "expert in war," to the help of David. But they fought no battle; and so it seems to have been with those mentioned 1 Chronicles 12:40; their prince's "choice and mighty men of valour," and the twenty-six. thousand men "apt to the war and to battle."

Some of the names given to those of this tribe are interesting, as we find them in 1 Chronicles 12:30. There is "Imnah," prosperity, or right-handedness; and his sister "Serah," abundance. Another female of the tribe (1 Chronicles 12:32) bears the name "Shua," the wealthy one. And then we have (1 Chronicles 12:37) "Bezer," the golden one; "Hod," honour; "Shamma," renown; "Ithran," eminence; and the list of names ends with (1 Chronicles 12:39) "Rezia," acceptableness, or favour, as if referring to Moses' blessing (Deuteronomy 33:24). In all this there is something very characteristic of Asher, the Happy One. In Moses' blessing Asher is brought in last, and he (Deuteronomy 33:29) exclaims, "Happy (Asher-like) art thou, 0 Israel!" There may be here an allusion to the tribe and his peculiar blessing, for in its essence it belongs to all Israel. Indeed, it belongs to the family of God, whether we take his name in itself, or the blessings showered down upon him. The family of God are "Asher," happy, because of pardon, as Psalms 32:1, sings. They have seen their sins buried in the depths, and "the daughters of JerusaIem" congratulate them on their felicity. The family of God are Asher, happy, because of holiness begun, as sung of in Psalms 119:1; they have entered on the conquest of all their passions, and are getting into the inheritance of holy conformity to God's likeness. The family of God are Asher, happy, amid troubles and trials, for all chastening works for their good, as Psalms 94:12, has sung. Happy are they in death, for the voice from heaven bids us write on their tomb, "Happy" (Revelation 14:13); and happy above all at the Lord's coming again, when they shall be greeted with the welcome, "Happy are they who are called, to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Revelation 19:9). Oh, true Ashers, eat your royal dainties. Your bread is fatness; you are blessed above angels your brethren. Dip your foot in oil, and fear no change, for thy walls and bulwarks are salvation, better than the warrior's shoes or the strongest bars of the mountain fortress, and your rest shall continue endless as eternity. Who would not be an Asherite? Receive God's testimony to his Son; believe as Abraham believed, and all this is yours. And yet again, we cannot but see in Asher's blessing a sample of what all Israel shall enjoy, undisturbed and unchanging, in the latter days, returning home from all lands. The "daughters" -men on earth and angels above-shall call them blessed; they shall have their bread, and fatness, and oil; they shall be blessed above their brethren the Gentile nations; and they shall rest in their lot secure while sun and moon endure. This shall be yours, Oh people of Israel, whensoever you, as a nation, welcome Him who is Earth's true "Asher"; whensoever you call Him blessed, uttering to Him your heart's acceptance, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matthew 23:39).

One has sung of this tribe in the following strain:- " A land of plenty Asher had, With olive-grove and vineyard clad; And God's own promise as his plea That 'as his days his strength should be.'

"Equipped for warfare Asher was With shoes of iron and of brass, In God Jehovah's name to smite The heaven-defying Amorite.

"Enamoured of the fertile soil, He dipped his foot in corn and oil; To ease he gave his soul a prey, In sloth he spent probation's day.

"He saw the Canaanite command His purple sea, his golden strand; * Nor quenched in blood of haughty Tyre Pale Ashtaroth and Baal's fire.

"And when the voice of Barak’s war Went thundering o’er his rocks afar, He sat and listened by his creek, Through love of ease enthralled and weak.

"Supine amid his folds he lay, And slept the promised strength away; Nor ventured on the mighty plea, ‘And as thy days thy strength shall be.’

"For this Assyria’s eagle came, For this, in land of unknown name, His coward sloth and guilty fears He mourns with unavailing tears.

"But not for aye. From sands and snow Of Orient pilgrim streams shall flow; And Jacob’s sons shall turn again To the returning latter rain.

"Baal and Ashtaroth no more Shall light their temples on his shore, When Asher’s feet again shall seek His olive-hills and ancient creek.

* * * * "Awake, ye slumberers in Zion;

Think not that ease is happiness! But seek the rest of Judah’s Lion When He shall come, the Prince of Peace."

PAULIN.

* Judges 1:31, compared with Joshua 19:21.

07.09. Issachar

ISSACHAR. OUR God is "The very God of peace" (1 Thessalonians 5:23) and delights to impart his peace. He has "made peace by the blood of the cross," a peace so full that a sinner may have in his conscience the very counterpart to the satisfaction felt by the Holy One who accepted the out-poured life of the peace-maker. It is this peace which is offered to us; its richness and glorious grace are (so to speak) the hire by which God would hire us into the acceptance of it. And then He would have all who find this peace to be peace-makers, proposing to others the peace they have themselves found; in a manner, hiring men into this blessed peace of God by showing them its nature and results. Yes, "Blessed are the peace-makers" (Matthew 5:9), whether in families, neighbourhoods, or nations, for they shadow forth the Great Peace-maker. But observe, God's peace never leads to sloth or ease. If God speaks peace, his saints do not turn again to folly; whereas man's modes of reaching and maintaining peace do continually result in cherishing inactivity, and indolence, and self-indulgent ease.

We shall find the history of Issachar presenting these truths to us in some aspects. The story of his birth is as follows (Genesis 30:14-18) :-As Leah had been alienated from her sister for a time so also it would seem had Jacob been alienated from her, perhaps on account of her treatment of Rachel. One day young Reuben found in the field some of the pale-yellow, strong-smelling mandrakes, or love-apples, which to this day in the East are supposed to promote child-bearing, and which, at all events, have exhilarating effects. Rachel prevailed on her sister to give up these to her; but the expected effect did not follow; the Lord hereby teaching Rachel the sin of trusting in human devices and natural means. On the other hand, and to impress this lesson all the more deeply and memorably on Rachel, the Lord at that very time gave to Leah another son, and did this in answer to Leah's prayers; for God hearkened to Leah (Genesis 30:17), thus answering Leah's faith while He rebuked Rachel's leaning upon sense.

Now, it is to be remembered that Leah had acted hitherto in the main with a view of getting back Jacob's affections and producing peace once more in the household. She had her eye upon this when giving Zilpah to Jacob (Genesis 30:18) at the expense of her own personal feeling; and with this thought on her mind, she exclaims at the birth of this son, " God hath given me my hire!" and bestows on him the name Issachar, "There is reward," or, "Here is hire!" Wages are given her; she sees God in this way owning her efforts.

There was compromise in Leah's dealing. Her giving Zilpah to Jacob was compromise; her giving up the mandrakes on the terms agreed upon was compromise; and the domestic circle enjoyed a calm as the result. In after days Issachar exhibited in his tribe very much of this peace produced by compromise. Jacob's blessing intimates it with sufficient clearness (Genesis 49:14-15).

"Issachar is a strong ass couching between two burdens;

He saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant, And bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute."

Delitzch remarks on this blessing, that it says in substance, "Ease at the cost of liberty will be the characteristic of Issachar." He shall be like a labourer that is content to work his day's work and get his hire. This tribe shall be like the strong ass, used in carrying burdens, and much employed in agricultural labour; Issachar shall not aim at, or exert himself to attain, political power. His inheritance, too, shall suit his tastes. "While the men of this tribe would rather submit to the yoke, than give up ease by struggling in the fight for liberty or renown, their portion of the land presented temptations in this direction. For to Issachar belonged Lower Galilee, and the beautiful, fertile, wide and level plain of Jezreel. In order to preserve the quiet enjoyment of this rich inheritance, he was willing to renounce very much that was nobler. His peace and quiet tended to indolence, and inactivity, and self-indulgence, all unlike the peace of God. In the camp this tribe numbered more men than Ephraim (Numbers 1:29-33), but they did no exploits like him. True, we see the strong ass in the mighty array of men fit for war, and the same is seen again when Issachar's princes come forth with Barak and Deborah to battle. His men of valour leave the great plain of Jezreel, or Esdraelon (which in part is also the valley of Megiddo); Issachar rises up from "couching between the burdens" ("the hurdles," or "cattle pens," where the cattle were safely lodged and fed); he leaves his pleasant rest between Tabor and Gilboa, and the hills and plains on every side, with their security and abundance. In that remarkable day- "Princes in Issachar were with Deborah! And Issachar was like Barak Rushing impetuously into the valley at his feet." (Judges 5:15)

They showed what the tribe could do, and might always have done; but this very sample of their possible efficiency rendered their inertness and slothful peace at other times more conspicuous. There was one judge from "this tribe, Tola (Judges 10:1), eminent, but unwarlike, probably a prudent, quiet ruler. In David's time we read of 87,000 (1 Chronicles 7:5); for there is mention first of 22,600, "valiant men of might" (1 Chronicles 7:2), and then (1 Chronicles 7:4-5) "in addition to these were bands of soldiers for war 36,000 men." This is surely indicative of the "strong ass." At the same time, however, the other feature appears. "They had many wives and sons," indicative of self-indulgence. Those who came to David in his adversity are spoken of as men given to thoughtful contemplation, and men who thus got insight into general principles of acting; for they are described as being "Men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chronicles 12:32). Of these there were 200 leading men, "and all their brethren were at their commandment." Characteristic enough of the tribe, is it not? to find the 87,000 warriors acquiescing quietly in the sway of what we might call the sages and statesmen of their own race. Tradition says, that these men calculated the exact times for the festivals, studying carefully those seasons, and giving "all their brethren" in Israel the advantage of their study and observation; but "the times" (*****) refers to public events, very much in our sense of the expression, as in Psalms 31:15, and 1 Chronicles 29:30. At any rate, they understood God's purpose regarding David, the anointed type of Messiah.

It is interesting to know that that godly Shunammite, who entertained Elisha for the Master's sake, was a woman of Issachar, a woman who in the best application of Issachar's tendency could say, "I dwell among my own people" (2 Kings 4:13), refusing to go forth from her quiet fields and home.

We have not yet taken notice of the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 33:18, "Rejoice, Issachar, in thy tents."

Moses predicts of him the same general characteristic as Jacob did, for it is the same Spirit who inspires both patriarchs. Moses tells of comfortable rest at home, "in thy tents;" and if Issachar seems farther (Deuteronomy 33:19) to be joined with Zebulon in the more active employment of "calling the nations" to the mountain of God, i.e., Jerusalem, still it was in his case chiefly, if not entirely, by attraction, not by aggression. Men of other nations were drawn to his luxuriant valleys, for part of his tribe was "Lower Galilee," famous for the influx of Gentiles, foreigners who came to trade, and whom the "men of Issachar, who had understanding of the times," would, no doubt, seek to allure to Jehovah's pure worship, imparting to them the knowledge of the only true God and Saviour.

Reference has been made to its great plains, Jezreel and Megiddo, where oft in times passed blood has been poured out by contending armies like water, and where, it may be, armies may again ere long meet for the terrible "day of Jezreel" and "battle of Armageddon." In this sense Issachar "bends between two burdens," for armies have met and will meet each other here, using Issachar's level plains for their own convenience without consulting him.

"Where bloomed in pride of beauty fair Jezreel, There Issachar's majestic strength was spread. The burden- bearer of the common weal He bent between the loads his patient head, Bearing the Assyrian yoke when Egypt fled, And Egypt's when the Assyrian's curb was broken. * Thy plain was watered oft with blood and tears;

Grief for Megiddo's slain is still the token Of future wail, when time's allotted years Have run their chequered course, and Zion's King appears."

PAULIN.

* 2 Kings 23:29-30. Not only was Jezreel in this tribe, Nain, too, where Jesus raised the dead, was here. Nevertheless peaceful Issachar rejected the Prince of Peace, and has shared to the full in the dispersion and desolation of all Israel; but is permitted to look forward to its close in "the day of Jezreel" (Hosea 1:11).

"Blest be thy portion, Issachar! for One has trod thy plains who came the world to save.

* * * * But thou in lands afar a tent and grave For sins of dark idolatry hast found.

Till, taught by heaven to make the better choice, No home is thine, Yet soon a thrilling sound Mine car shall hear; a death -awakening voice Shall bid thee once again within thy tents rejoice.'

* * * * Then sighs of deeper grief the air shall fill Than Hadadrimmon's mourning; for the cross Seen in salvation's light all hearts shall thrill. That sight shall change all glory into dross. The Prince of Peace proclaims the jubilee! THE DAY of coming time shall that of Jezreel be."

PAULIN.

07.10. Zebulun

ZEBULUN.

HERE is a general sketch of the lot and history of Zebulun:- "While faithful to thy covenant King, In holy might excelling, Thy haven welcomed storm-tossed ships, * Home to thy quiet dwelling.

*Genesis 49:13 "Thy thousands scattered Jabin’s pride, * In Kishon’s stormy fight;

Thy tens of thousands swept away The conquering Amorite.

* Judges 5:18 "And when the tribes to Salem poured;* Their festal tides along, Thy banner on the hill of God Waved with the jubilant song.

* Deuteronomy 33:18 "0 Zebulun, my valleys spread, Fair in the morning’s sheen; But fairest when He dwelt in thee, * The sinless Nazarene.

* Matthew 4:15 "Great was thy glory when thou dwel’st At haven of the sea; But greatest when He sheltered souls On thy shore, blue Galilee.

"And even now in Cana’s name, In Nazareth and its hill, In Magdala, on Tabor’s height, * A fragrance lingers still;

* 1 Chronicles 6:77 "Which yet shall fill the dewy air, Of that long-looked-for day, When He returns who was thy Light, * Returns to shine for aye!"-PAULIN.

* Matthew 4:15-16 In Genesis 30:19-20, we read the narrative of Zebulun’s birth-time. There was gladness in the tents of Jacob; Leah’s voice was heard acknowledging the kindness of the Lord. "God [He who alone disposes and rules in matters private as well as public] has given me a good dowry;" and she calls it "good," because of what she anticipated would result from it, viz., "For now shall my husband dwell with me." Writers generally suppose that she used the term ***** "to endow," because of its being so far an alliteration with ****** "to dwell," playing on the words in the happy moment of her son’s birth. She thinks it sure that her bringing so much to her husband (this being her sixth gift to him) will secure his becoming more warmly attached to her, and his ever after dwelling with her. This last of a cluster of gifts will complete her victory over any remaining alienation that may have for a time existed in his mind. Who does not know that "A man’s gift maketh room for him" (Proverbs 18:16). "Whithersoever it turned it prospereth ’. (Proverbs 17:8). Benefits, kindnesses, gifts, succeed in removing distance, coolness, alienation, when other things have failed. It is so between man and man, and it is even so between God and man; that is, God has used this natural instinct of gratitude for favour as a means of melting down man’s enmity. His Spirit raises in our hearts the question, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?" It is a remarkable clause in Psalms 68:18, "Thou hast received gifts for men, that the Lord God might dwell among them." View it in two ways. On the one hand, it speaks of gifts inducing the Lord to be a Zebulun to us, to dwell with us, as if persuaded by Christ’s gift, Christ’s dowry of righteousness, and the glory rendered to the Father’s name for us. On the other hand, it speaks of the Lord finding

out a way of dwelling with us by leading us to come and dwell with Him. He shows us "the gift of God," and who it is who gives it (John 4:10), thus subduing our resistance, and prevailing over our alienated souls. Was it not thus that (in Zebulun's borders) He prevailed on the "son of Zebedee" (the name signifies "dowry") to follow Him, holding out the gift, "I will make you fishers of men"? Shall we not learn from our God how to allure our fellow-men, holding out to them God's great gift of his Son? and so we shall in a higher sense become what Zebulun's tribe became in after days, "havens to ships," storm-tossed (Genesis 49:13), and callers of others to the mountain, while we show them what God has done (Deuteronomy 33:19).

Jacob's blessing alludes to the meaning of the name "Zebulun [he whose name signifies dwelling] shall dwell at the haven [or shore] of the seas; he shall be a haven [or shore] for ships; and his border shall be over Zidon" (Genesis 49:13). He is to bring in foreigners to dwell with him, by presenting a roadstead for ships-a shore where they may find shelter and anchorage. The Bay of Carmel seems chiefly to be alluded to. "Their border went up toward the sea" (Joshua 19:11; compo Joshua 9:1); that is, the Mediterranean, here called "the seas," because, perhaps, of the bay suggesting a north and a south sea coming in. Others understand "seas" to refer to the fact that his region stretched from the Mediterranean to the shore of the Sea of Galilee. But what is meant by "his border shall be over Zidon?"* It intimates that his position would give him easy access to Zidon, and might further suggest that by his ships his border may be said to reach even as far as Zidon. However, the simplest view is that *** is to be understood as "over," in the sense of superiority; q. d., though he shall never rival Zidon in merchandise and in naval renown, yet his Bay of Carmel shall attract when Zidon fails. Delitzsch notes that a proof of the genuine antiquity of Jacob's words is furnished by the fact that Zidon, not Tyre, is the city, for Tyre was not then famous; indeed, not founded till the times of the Judges. But renowned as Zidon may have been for luxuries, and even if Zebulun's fisheries, and purple-dye, found on his shores, and such like merchandise, should never equal that merchant city, still his tribe has temporal blessings that might allure even Zidon to his borders; besides having the far greater blessings referred to by Moses in Deuteronomy 33:19, and spoken of clearly by Isaiah (Isaiah 9:1-2).

* See in Ugolinus the treatise by Hasaeus, "De Zabulonis prae Zidone Praestantia." Thomson ("Land and Book," i. 484) supposes that Zidon may have then been equivalent to Phoenicia; and understands "His border shall reach unto Zidon," to signify that Zebulun's boundaries should stretch towards Phoenicia.

Moses, in his blessing, alludes to one of the characteristics of this tribe, his attractive influence, when he joins him with Issachar in the prediction (Deuteronomy 33:19)- "They shall call nations to the mountain;

There they offer sacrifice of righteousness." The Gentiles were allured to dwell with Zebulun we know well, for "Galilee of the Gentiles" was in part his territory. But Moses seems to say that while these nations were attracted by them to the mountain where sacrifice should be offered, it was in the first instance by Zebulun's produce and merchandise that they were drawn- "For they shall seek the abundance of the seas, And the hidden treasures of the sand;" earthly good things-fish, purple shells, glass, and all besides that their position on "the seas" enabled them to traffic in. In spite, too, of Delitzsch's remark to the contrary, "Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out," is a clause that does seem to refer to this tribe's enterprise and traffic, although we have no record of their

undertakings in this department. But Zebulun was at all times ready not only to draw others in to dwell with him, but "to go out," when occasion required. His numbers stood high in the enumeration in the wilderness, first 57,000, and then 60,000 fighting men. When Barak and Deborah summoned Israel to battle, Zebulun came at once. "Take with thee," said Deborah to Barak, "ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali, and of the children of Zebulun" (Judges 4:6); and her song celebrates them as (Judges 5:18)- "A people that jeoparded their lives unto the death in the high places of the field." In Gideon's day they are among those who "came up to meet him" (Judges 6:35), when he blew the trumpet, and sent his messengers. Nor were they wanting in the day of David's trial and distress; for 50,000 of them came to help God's anointed king in his adversity; "men that went forth to battle" (1 Chronicles 12:33), **** comp. **** (Deuteronomy 33:19)- "Expert in war, with all instruments of war, Fifty thousand that could keep rank, They were not of double heart." The men of this tribe (2 Chronicles 30:11) in the days of Hezekiah, if they are not found calling others to the mountain, where sacrifice was offered, at any rate encouraged others to go by sending many of their number up to Jerusalem to keep the Passover. "Divers of Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem" (2 Chronicles 30:11). "A multitude of the people, many of Issachar and Zebulun" (2 Chronicles 30:18).

Some understand that Ibzan, the judge, mentioned in Judges 12:8, was of this tribe; and the Bethlehem, where he was buried, is in that case, the city mentioned in Isaiah 19:15, the name and remains of which have been found by travellers in the midst of an oak forest. But at any rate, Elon (Judges 12:12) was of this tribe; for with curious emphasis it is repeated, "Elon, a Zebulonite, judged Israel ten years," "Elon, the Zebulonite died, and was buried in Aijalon, in the country of Zebulun." And one other fact let us not fail to remember, viz., Nazareth was in this tribe. The tribe, whose name means "Dwelling," was the tribe in whose bounds the Incarnate Son of God dwelt thirty years; and on the shore of one of its seas how often was He to be found? If nought else had distinguished Zebulun, this alone would have been enough in our eyes to fill up the prediction, "His border shall be above Zidon." Rejoice, Zebulun, and call the nations to the mountain where sacrifices of righteousness are offered. Invite all men hither; for in God manifest in the flesh-Jesus of Nazareth-they shall find better than all earthly wealth, better than the abundance of the seas. They shall find the One great sacrifice which supersedes all others; they shall discover that "the Word made flesh, who dwelt among us," is the best of hidden treasures; and shall agree with us that his presence has made the border of Zebulun far to excel the border of Zidon.

07.11. Joseph, i.e. Ephraim and Manasseh

JOSEPH; i. e. EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH.

RACHEL loved the Lord, and acknowledged Him in her domestic life. But she had something of the fretfulness of Jonah, peevishly finding "good cause to be angry," because the Lord had shut up her womb. On this very account, the Lord, chastising her as a daughter, long withheld her desire. She on her part ceased not to cry to the Lord, and perhaps was stirred to more importunate pleading by Leah having recently called her daughter "Dinah" (the judgment-one), as if in triumph over Dan. At all events, she did call on the Lord, and "God remembered Rachel" (Genesis 30:22), and opened her womb. No sooner was her son born than she gave glory to God; "God [Elohim] has taken away my reproach; Jehovah will add to me another son," calling his name "Joseph," which has a peculiar combination of allusions in itself. It has "Jehovah" in it; it has ****, "take away," in it; and it has **** "add," in it; so that **** is really "He by whom Jehovah takes away reproach, and by whom He gives a pledge of his readiness to give more."

There is something noble in Rachel’s thoughts on this occasion; she adores God in his liberality and willingness to bless. Once let Him begin, and He will go on; for if the hindrance is removed, He delights to give. The floodgates once opened, the water pours along. Is it not so in salvation? Has He found his way to us, bestowing "repentance and remission of sins"? Then the way is open for more, and He will give daily mercy, increasing holiness, abounding peace, endless glory. Indeed, Rachel’s language, "The Lord will add." is substantially Paul’s, "Now to Him that is able [signifying heart as well as hand] to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20).

It has been remarked by writers that the birth of a son by a mother who was long childless, is, in Scripture always referred to as a special boon of rare kindness; and that such a son is given to carry out some peculiar designs. At all events, God’s dealing with Rachel was rightly interpreted by her; and her acknowledgment of divine liberality met with divine approval. Her son Joseph’s tribe became a most notable illustration of the Lord’s bounteous giving "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over" (Luke 6:38).

Rachel magnified, we have said, the Lord’s liberality. "She opened her mouth wide, and the Lord filled it." Might we not get her ample measure of blessing were we, like her, putting unbounded confidence in his giving heart? The Lord did show Himself in her son’s history, far more fully than in her own, as the God who "takes away reproach," and who goes on "adding" to former favours. Hear Jacob’s blessing (Genesis 49:22-26)- "A fruitful bough is Joseph, A fruitful bough by a well, Whose branches run over the wall."

You call to mind Joseph’s wondrous greatness in Egypt, how his power was felt and his kindly shadow in every corner of the land, as well as in Goshen. Next, you call to mind his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, how they increased in their descendants, till they formed two great tribes; "His branches running over the wall:" for no other of Jacob’s sons multiplied in this manner. You call to mind how Manasseh’s territory was on either side Jordan, Joseph’s branches "running over

the wall," here again-not to speak of his many mighty ones, and his noble bands, with such men as Joshua, excelling in true fruitfulness, in the forefront. But we read on- "The archers sorely grieved him, shot at him, and hated him: But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong By the hands of Jacob's Mighty One." His reproach was turned away, and recoiled on his foes, and all this was done by Jehovah; it came- "From thence, from the Shepherd, the stone of Israel; From the God of thy father, who shall help thee; From the Almighty who shall bless thee."

Yes, from him of whom thy mother said, "He shall add;" He shall ever be found true to his character, going on "helping," and going on "blessing." And what a flood of blessing!

"Blessings of heaven above;" the rain and dew Dropping on his territory plenteously.

"Blessings of the deep that lieth beneath;" fountains And rivers pouring out their gushing floods.

"Blessings of the breast and of the womb;" increase Of every kind in full measure. The giving, or "adding," bounty of Jehovah towards Joseph, is so full, so singularly full, that Jacob exclaims, with allusion to the more general and indefinite blessing, common to all the tribes, pronounced by Isaac, as well as declared to Abraham- "Thy father's blessings rise high (like the Flood's waters) above my progenitor's blessings;

Up to the everlasting hills.

Let them be on JOSEPH'S head! On the crown of the head of him who is distinguished among his brethren." The surpassing richness of his territory, even to the summit of its hills (witness the hills of Samaria, Bashan, and Gilead!) with the accompanying abundance of all things, and the population revelling in this luxuriance; this, and much more, is included in this blessing on him who was "separated," in the sense of being above the rest in dignity and influence. But shall we be able to trace in Moses' blessing (Deuteronomy 33:13-17) any recognition of Rachel's God, who shows in Joseph's case that He will honour them who hesitate not to expect that He will give and give again? It is even so. Moses does discern in Joseph's lot the same exuberant bounty of Jehovah. We need not quote the words in full; but there are a few things specified which illustrate the history of Joseph's double tribe. He sings of the accomplishment of Jacob's blessing in the gift of copious, overflowing, plenteous waters; and the precious productions ripened by the "sun and moon," and given to Joseph at the regular periods in succession, so that his very "hills," with their olives, vines, metals, pastures, spices, contributed to form a sample of "earth and its fulness"; and all through the "goodwill of His who dwelt in The Bush," i. e., the free sovereign favour of Jehovah who at The Bush intimated how He meant to dwell with undeserving men, blessing and not consuming them. But Moses proceeds to tell some distinctive features of Joseph's tribe-namely, in regard to its double nature- "The first-born of his bullock, glory is to him;

Even buffalo-horns are his horns." This is Ephraim, whom Jacob raised to the position of first-born (Genesis 48:8). Ephraim was to have special honour; he was, in Joshua, to push the nations of Canaan, and in after days to seat himself on the throne of the Ten Tribes.* But at the same time, it is not only in Ephraim, "the mighty tribe," that Joseph is to be represented; in this instance one son of Jacob is to originate two tribes- "And they [these sons of Joseph whom you see] are the myriads of Ephraim! And they are the thousands of Manasseh!"

* In the symbolical sealing, Revelation 7:8. Joseph evidently stands for Ephraim, for Revelation 7:6 has Manasses separately Who does not feel that the horn of plenty has been emptied on this Tribe?

"Blest of the Lord was Joseph’s Iand With sacred treasure of the dew and deep;

Blest by the moon in Nature’ s hour of sleep, And by the sun with autumn’s golden heap, To fill the Reaper’s hand.

"His was the strength of ancient hills, The treasure of the pasture and the mine;

And, crowning all, a blessing more divine, Clear in that light that made The Bush to shine, Leapt his rejoicing rills.

"Blest was his portion when beside The well of Sychar sat the Holy One, Footsore and weary ’neath a shadeless sun, Opening to one who sin’s career had run Salvation’s healing tide.

"Bald Ebal and fair Gerizim, Ages have passed, but lightly o’er your brow; But o’er your wandering tribes hangs even now The curse that hath avenged the broken vow Of faithless Ephraim.

"Yet to his record’s promise true, The Man of Sychar cometh once again, All Gerizim’s rich blessings in his train, To pour on Joseph’s land the latter rain, And Shiloh’s life renew."-PAULIN.

It would not be possible, within our limits, to sketch with any fulness, the history of the teeming thousands and ten thousands of Joseph. We might speak of cities, Shiloh, Sychem, Tirzah, Samaria; and of Manasseh’s inheritance on the west of Jordan, stretching from Bethshan to where afterwards rose Caesarea; and then of his portion in the east, where stood the sixty cities called Havoth-Jair, where the hill of Bashan reared its head, with a plain at its foot extending in one unbroken expanse, flat as the surface of a lake, for fifty miles. Truly Joseph’s spreading branches "ran over the wall."

We may, however, glean a few less known facts about these sons of Joseph from the book of Chronicles. It is recorded that "there fell some of Manasseh to David, as he went to Ziklag, Adnah, and Jozabad, and Jediael, and Michael, and Jozabad, and Elihu, and Zilthai, captains of the thousands that were of Manasseh" (1 Chronicles 12:20). These seven leaders and their men took the part of the despised and persecuted son of Jesse, casting in their lot with him in the day of his calamity; "And they helped David against the band of the rovers [the roving Amalekites and others]: for they were all mighty men of valour, and were princes in the host." In 1 Chronicles 12:31 it is said that they numbered eighteen thousand men. This was on the west side of Jordan; but their brethren on the east side also came, "Of the half tribe of Manasseh, on the other side of Jordan," along with a company of Reubenites and Gadites, reminding us of the early days, when these allied tribes crossed over to the help of Joshua. They came "with all manner of instruments of war for the battle, an hundred and twenty thousand." Very deep hold had the cause of David taken on their hearts, and David’s cause was the cause of God; so that we may say there was in those days no common interest felt for the things of God in Joseph’s borders. It was most honourable to them, and is a noble example to us; for in this there is a type. As they adhered to David, the anointed, in his day of adversity, so are we to follow the true David in days of evil, such as the present times are; for "if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him." We should have noted that Ephraim also sent to the same cause his "twenty thousand eight hundred" (1 Chronicles

12:30), "mighty men of valour, famous throughout the house of their fathers." Well did it become the descendants of Him who is described as "shot at by the archers, sorely grieved, and hated" (Genesis 49:23), thus to come forward and take the part of God’s servant in days when the archers shot at him, as he sang in Psalms 64:3-4. From another part of First Chronicles we glean something more. In 1 Chronicles 7:15, we find Machir, of Manasseh, marrying Maachah, of Benjamin, thus again illustrating Joseph’s branches "running over the wall." In verse 16 it is told that this Maachah called her first-born "Peresh," as if alluding to this spreading of Joseph’s vine, for "Peresh" signifies "spreading." But we gather more regarding Ephraim. In that same chapter, 1 Chronicles 7:21-23, we find that he to whom the blessings of Jacob and of Moses held up such bright visions of prosperity was at first the most vexed and tried of all Jacob’s sons, even like his father Joseph, and Joseph’s mother, Rachel. For after he had called one son Zabad, "dowry" ; another Shuthelah, "plantation of greenness"; another Ezer, "help"; and another Elead, "God adorns," his prospects were suddenly and sorely darkened. The men of Gath (native Hittites, it may be, before the time of the later Philistines), in some engagement, slew these promising sons of Ephraim! It is thought that these sons of Ephraim had gone out of Goshon and entered Palestine, and assailed these men of Gath, perhaps thinking that God would at that time give the people into their hands, pushing them before them, since the land was theirs by promise. But, as afterwards, in the siege of Ai, the Lord taught that it is not a good cause itself that gives victory, but the actual and present help of Him whose cause it is. Ephraim mourned bitterly and long, perhaps alarmed as well as amazed; for it seamed as if Jehovah’s words were falling to the ground. He called his infant, then born, Beriah, "one born in misfortune." But the clouds soon broke; his daughter Sherah (verse 24) is found on the highlands of Palestine, near where her brothers perished, and becomes renowned, building the two towns of Beth-horon the nether and the upper-a woman, the founder of Ephraim’s greatness, as if a foreshadowing of the time when the Virgin should bring to earth its true ray of hope! There flowed also ere long a full stream from Beriah’s fountain, beginning in Rephah, and Reseph, "riches," and "flame of lightening," till it reached Nun and Joshua (1 Chronicles 7:25-27). It was thus that the Lord tried faith before He honoured it, appearing to extinguish the hopes of Joseph’s first-born ere He brought them to full perfection. Such is the way of our God; the sorrow goes before the joy, even as Messiah is first the Man of Sorrows, and then crowned with glory and honour. Nor has Joseph been finally given over. His blessing is in reversion; for Jeremiah says (Jeremiah 31:5, Jeremiah 31:12, Jeremiah 31:14) of "Ephraim, the Lord’s first-born" (Jeremiah 31:9, Jeremiah 31:20).

"Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountain of Samaria; The planters shall plant, and shall eat them as common things, For there shall be a day when the watchman upon Mount Ephraim shall cry, ‘Arise, and let us go up to Zion, to the Lord our God.’

* * * * * * * And they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, And flow together to the goodness of the Lord, For wheat and for wine, and for oil, For the sons of the flock and of the land; And their soul shall be like a well-watered garden, And they shall not sorrow any more at all.

* * * * * * And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, And my people shall be satisfied with my goodness."

Surely this is the very God of Joseph!

07.12. Benjamin

BENJAMIN. THE only one of the twelve patriarchs born in Palestine was Benjamin. The circumstances of his birth are well known. His mother Rachel (Genesis 35:16-20), after an interval of nearly twenty years, got this other son from the Lord; but it seems she was feeble and desponding as the hour of birth drew near, and had hard labour. Though her attendant sought to comfort her by saying, "Fear not, for this also is a son for thee"-words fitted to recall her own faith when her first son was born (Genesis 30:24)-she heeded not, but despondingly pronounced, "Ben-oni," son of my sorrow, over the child, and expired. Tradition still points out the spot whore she was buried; every traveller to this day knows "Rachel's Tomb," midway between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. But Jacob would not perpetuate the sadness, or at least would fain throw over it a gleam of sunshine, and therefore names the child "Benjamin," son of the right hand, expressive of what he hoped for him, as well as declaring his strong affection to him for his mother's sake. Jacob in this did well; he looked at what God might bring out of this calamity and not simply at the sad event itself. See the patriarch, full of faith, after all the toil and weariness of his long wanderings, and after the bitter anguish caused by Dinah's sin, and her brothers' cowardly and atrocious murder of the Sychemites-see the aged saint standing at Rachel's tomb, "looking not at the things that are seen, but at the things which are not seen," anticipating blessing in the Lord's time and way for this sorest bereavement that had befallen him, and by the name "Benjamin" sealing his faith. Rachel looked at affliction on the side of human feeling, and judged by her frame of mind; Jacob viewed it as it can be seen by faith. Nature sees only gloom, and cries Ben-oni! Faith penetrates the gloom, and discovering light beyond, cries Benjamin! Faith is not "Like moonlight on a troubled sea, Bright'ning the storm it cannot calm."

Faith calms the waves, for it brings to us Him who can say, "Peace, be still." Jacob's blessing on Benjamin (Genesis 49:27) has reference to this scene. Indeed it is as if his heart were torn up by the memories which the mention of Benjamin called up. But, in truth, the future lot of Benjamin and his descendants was to be in keeping with their starting-point-scenes of sorrow passing into scenes of joy.

"Benjamin is a ravening wolf."

He shall be marked by having to do with scenes wherein tearing asunder and violent rending shall be prominent, even as his birth-time was a time of rending ties asunder; and yet there shall be to him results of peace and scenes of triumph. He shall afterwards be like the wolf in its den, leisurely feasting on its prey after the carnage is over- "In the morning he shall devour the prey; In the evening divide the spoil."

Some of the old Rabbins refer to the fact that Jerusalem and its altar properly belonged to Benjamin; so that in the sacrifices, morning by morning, day by day, for about fifteen hundred years, Benjamin was seen "ravening like a wolf, devouring the prey." If so, we would add, "In the evening he divided the spoil;" for if he was Ben-oni in having to do with blood and death, with victims slain and cut in pieces, with the skin flayed, and the bones divided, and the fat distributed,

yet was he also Benjamin in having the privilege of seeing by faith the great sacrifice, through these types of the Lamb of God to be slain for sinners, and afterwards the wondrous honour of actually having that great sacrifice present in the temple. Others illustrate Jacob's words by referring to the history of the deliverance of Israel by Ehud's singular deed of blood, and to the wolf-like ravening of the tribe in defence of Gibeah (Judges 20:1-48), which was forgotten ere long in the exploits of Saul, the first king of Israel. They add also the happy times that at a later period passed over scattered Israel through Mordecai and Esther, both belonging to this tribe, in whose case certainly everything at first had the sad aspect of Ben-oni, but passed completely over to the cheerful sunshine of Benjamin. One other fact should not be forgotten: if in the earlier period of this tribe's history the Ben-oni aspect prevails-"the ravening of the wolf"-yet in Saul's days "little Benjamin" (Psalms 68:27) became mighty (1 Samuel 9:21, comp. with 1 Samuel 14:47-48); and after the days of David you see the Benjamin-aspect appear more decidedly still-the dividing of the prey in peace; when this tribe was associated with Judah in holding the sceptre till Shiloh come, returning with Judah from Babylon. In Ezekiel 48:23, we find him side by side with Judah still, bordering on the Holy Oblation. Some of the Fathers were convinced that the prophecy went even further in minute fulfilment. They saw in it the history of a notable man of his tribe-Saul of Tarsus--making havoc of the Church like a wolf (*********), and the dividing the prey with the Church when his heart was turned. Saul becoming Paul the Apostle is, in their view, as Ben-oni becoming Benjamin. The blessing of Moses (Deuteronomy 33:12) gives us the cheerful side, as if he had been led by the inspiring Spirit to dwell as much upon the Benjamin characteristic, as Jacob had done on the Ben-oni. Hence he calls him, " Beloved of the Lord"-q.d., not beloved of Jacob only, but of the Lord also-a title which is specially appropriate to him as in part possessing that token of God's favour, the Temple and part of the Holy City within his borders. The sense of the other clauses may be given thus:- "He shall dwell in safety by Jehovah, Who shall cover him all the day long."

Jehovah shall be his canopy (*****, compare the ****** of Isaiah 4:5), "Jehovah shall dwell amid his hills," especially referring to Jerusalem and his portion of it; though others explain the words, "Benjamin shall be like a son whom his father carries on his shoulders" (Deuteronomy 1:20, Delitzsh). Oh world, the favour of our God changes the lot of sorrow into joy; but your lot, though it is a Benjamin's portion in measure (Genesis 43:34), shall soon become Ben-oni.

It is a singular fact in the history of this tribe, that so many of them were left-handed, and yet "could sling stones at a hair's breadth." It is singular that so many "Benjamin's" should be "left-handed," but specially that this apparent defect and disadvantage should have been remedied by the marvellous skill which distinguished the left-handed ones. This fact is noted of Ehud (Judges 3:15), and of the army of Gibeah, in which were "seven hundred chosen men left-handed" (Judges 20:16). Was there not something here of Ben-oni turned into Benjamin? It is not less interesting to find of this tribe "mighty men who could use both the right hand and the left in hurling stones and shooting arrows out of a bow" (1 Chronicles 12:2). These men of might, "helpers of the war," were of "Saul's brethren, of Benjamin," so that the dark cloud that lowered on David from the side of Benjamin in the person of Saul is now giving forth bright beams. The Dames of their leaders are given in full; and then again, at 1 Chronicles 12:16, "men of Benjamin" joined with men of Judah in going to David, with Amasai at their head. It is still the dark cloud followed by the clear, shining after-rain. How honourable and noble these "brethren of Saul," who, in the day of calamity,

discovered God’s anointed one, and followed him at all hazards. Fit representatives of the true disciples of the Lord now, who forsake kindred and friends to take the side of Christ, suffering with Him that they may in due time reign with Him-content to be Ben-onis for a time, that they may for ever be Benjamins. In 1 Chronicles 8:1-40. there is full information given about the descendants of Benjamin on account of their connection with Saul and Jonathan. In the close of that genealogical table appears the infant son of Merib-baal, or Mephibosheth, namely, Micah. In him Jonathan’s line was brought very low, almost to extinction; but 1 Chronicles 8:35-36 tell how Micah’s family grew and was strong. The first two names in it are "Pithon," enlargement, and "Melec," king; and after a catalogue has been given of illustrious descendants, verse 40 ends by saying, "The sons of Ulam were mighty men of valour, archers, and had many sons, and sons’ sons, an hundred and fifty. All these are the sons of Benjamin." It is still the same story, the Ben-oni aspect first, and then the "right hand." The Lord enlightens the darkness; and in the latter days thus it shall be with this tribe, and with all Israel. Their whole past history might, in some respects, be spoken of as sad and sorrowful; but their future shall be all joy and singing, when the Lord brings back the captivity of his people.

Thy birth-night was a time of love and tears;

Thy mother travailed sore.

"Son of my sorrow!" Rachel feebly moaned, Then sank, and all was o’er.

"Son of my right hand," weeping Jacob cried;

"Dearest of sons to me! That name bear thou; of her who gave thee birth In endless memory."

Deep-written in thy tribe’s sad history, One name too oft appears; From Egypt, * Gibeah, ** and Gilboa’s *** height, Ben-oni looks in tears.

* Genesis 43:1-34. And Genesis 45:1-28. ** Judges 14:1-20, Judges 20:1-48. *** 1 Samuel 1:1-29. But when of Israel’s revolted tribes The star in night had died, "Son of the right hand," faithful Benjamin, Still sat at Judah’s side. And though, Ben-oni, ages have swept past, While thou hast worn the chain, When evening comes, thou must "divide the spoil."

Rise, Benjamin, again!

Chapter 98

S. A sermon to children

A sermon to children.

'There were also with Him other little ships'

Mark 4:36 Some of the little things we do in our meetings with you are imitations of Christ's ways. When you are going away from a meeting we sometimes give you a tract ; so Jesus in sending the people away gave each of them a blessing. It was evening, and He was kept late as He thus spoke a parting word into each ear. His disciples were a little impatient perhaps, for they saw a storm gathering, and they wanted to be over to the other side. At last He came, tired and wearied, and they took Him 'as He was' in the ship. He went to the end of the ship where there was a leathern pillow or seat not quite so hard as Jacob's pillow at Bethel, but still only a bench covered with leather, and fell asleep■so soundly asleep that not even the storm awoke Him, nor the waves, nor the alarm and cries of His disciples. At last they went up to Him, as the mariners did to Jonah, and by their cries, and perhaps by their touch, awoke Him. Instantly He rose, looked around, calmly spoke, 'Peace, be still!' and spread His own calm over the sea. What wonder appeared on every face! 'What manner of man is this?' He said, 'You should not have wondered with One so great beside you. O ye of little faith!' And thus they glided into the harbour.

Now I have reserved a portion for you. It is this. 'And there were also with Him other little ships.' These 'little ships' remind us of you. They set sail with Jesus, and crossed the sea with Him to the Gadarene country. Notice some things about the people in these'little ships,' for I am going to compare you to them.

I. They needed Christ's care.

II. They liked Christ's company.

III. They got a share of the calm.

I. They needed Christ's care.

They had a voyage to take, it was late, and darkness was coming on. A storm was threatening,■ probably there were mutterings of thunder far off,■ the wind was rising, and the water was ruffled. They felt it would be good to have others near, and specially to have Him near who could do mighty things for them. Perhaps they heard Him say to His own crew, 'Let us go over to the other side,' and thought, 'Then we also can go, and be as safe as He.'

Young people, like these 'little ships,' you have a voyage to take to the other side. You may have many storms, but one thing I know, you need Christ. There is not a sin in you but will raise a storm soon. Every pang of conscience, every fear, every foreboding, is the mutter of the thunder. What will you do? Young people's sins are very terrible. One wave of that storm will sink your vessel to the bottom.'The soul that sinneth it shall die.' Then this is a time of storms in the world. The last days are to have peculiar tempests, ■'the sea and the waves roaring.' Only those will get safe to

shore who have Jesus with them, and it is awfully perilous to be without Him. O the storms of the last days!

'When first the Saviour wakened me And showed me why He died, He pointed o'er life's narrow sea And said, " To yonder side."

I am the Ark where Noah dwelt, And heard the deluge roar■ No soul can perish that has felt My rest■To yonder shore.'

II. They liked Christ's company.

These people in the 'little ships' had been that day among His hearers. His words had been felt by them. They had heard the parable of the Sower, of the Mustard-seed, of the Hid Treasure (Matthew 13:1-58.), and they had heard Him say, 'He that hath ears to hear let him hear'■proclaiming to all sinners their welcome. 'It is finished' is alike for you and for the older people, for the 'little ships' as well as for the greater. It is the same Jesus who saved Peter and John and Paul, who can save you. The same obedience to the Law, the same blood shed, form the righteousness of a young sinner and of an older sinner. Do you not like His company? Be like the little ships. Come and see. Who can bless you but Christ? Is there any so loving, so gracious, so kind? Was there ever company like His? Surely you like Him who said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me.' Surely you like His company. Would you not like to hear Him say to you, 'With Me in Paradise ?'

III. They got a share of the calm.

After the danger and fear and alarm,■tossed on the waters,■the waves beating on the ship so that 'it was full' (Matthew 13:37), Christ says, 'Peace, be still,' and there is a great calm. Now the 'little ships' share also in the wonder, 'What manner of man is this!'

Dear children, come with Him, and you will share in the calm. It may be you have been troubled, alarmed, ay, and thought, 'Surely He does not care whether or not we perish.' But only try,■only be where He is saying 'Peace, be still' to others. Be at the Cross when He says to the dying thief, 'To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.' Be at His tomb, and hear the angel's words, 'Fear not, for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified.' Be with Him when He says, 'Peace be unto you,' and shows His hands and His side. You, too, shall share in it all, and you, too, shall wonderingly say, 'What manner of man is this!' And those of you who already know Him, when other storms come you will be able to sing Psalms 46:1-11. 'God is our refuge and our strength.' And if your corruptions and passions raise a storm remember these others verses of Mr. M'Cheyne's: - ■Peaceful and calm the tide of life When first I sailed with Thee, My sins forgiven, no inward strife, My breast a glassy sea. But soon the storm of passion raves, My soul is tempest-toss'd;

Corruptions rise like angry waves■

"Help, Master, I am lost !"

"Peace, peace, be still, thou raging breast, My fulness is for thee," The Saviour speaks and all is rest, Like the waves of Galilee. The more you know Christ, the more you will say, 'What manner of man is this! What manner of Saviour!'

O little ships, come and sail with Jesus! Get His care, His company, and His calm!

Chapter 99

S. ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS

ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

Ephesians 1:3

There are many wonderful things in this epistle. Sometimes we are told to look up to the 'heavenly places;' sometimes to look back, past eternity; and again we are told to look far forward, into the 'ages to come.' Men used to come to Ephesus to see the great temple of Diana. If we read this epistle to Ephesus, the Holy Spirit opening our eyes, we will see things more wonderful. We will not have read many verses till we have to stand still and wonder. Let us see in this verse :

1. Christ in the heavenly places. - This is another name for the right hand of God. Christ's work is all done, and so the Father has said, 'Sit down' in the place of glory and honour. His reward is begun. The Father has poured upon Him the oil of joy above His fellows. 'Thou hast made Him most blessed for ever.'

2. The Father gives to Christ all manner of blessing.- The blessings first come to Christ, and from Him they come to us. We get them 'in Christ.' 'The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hand.' We must go to Christ for everything. 'All things are delivered unto Me.' The devil claims the world, but he is a usurper. Christ says, 'All things are delivered unto Me by my Father.' 'He has received gifts for men.' There is a great supply of gifts, but they are all in Christ.

3.The Father gives all manner of blessing to Christ's people. - Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings,' etc. Has every believer got them? We look round, and we see some very poor believers of whom we hope there is grace in them. Can we say of them that they have been blessed with all spiritual blessings? The Israelites got a grant from God of the whole land, even as far as to the Euphrates. But they did not take possession of it all as they were warranted to do. God has given us a grant of all these blessings, but He does not say we have taken advantage of them all. Believers are often contented with just the main things, but they don't go on to all. How many stand still and say, 'we have got a great deal of joy.' Very good, but you must go on to more. You have got the thirtyfold, but you might go on to the sixty and a hundredfold. You are warranted to expect a very great deal. All that Christ has we have a grant of, and we may go and knock and say, 'I have come for all spiritual blessings,' and the Lord will say, 'You have done well to come. I wondered when you would come for them.' When you find in reading the Bible any blessing Christ has to give, put your finger on it and say, 'That is a gift for men, a gift for me. I may go and ask for it.' How many things have we left unsought?

4.The nature of these blessings. - They are 'spiritual blessings.' God has not blessed us with strength so that we are never to be weak, - with health, so that we are never to be sick, - with riches, so that we are never to know poverty. Not at all.

He hath blessed us with spiritual blessings. We begin with forgiveness. We must have guilt taken away before we can handle any of these other blessings. Then we get the blessing of adoption. We get into the Father's presence and we stand there in love, He loving us, and we loving Him. We have a seat in the heavenly places waiting for us, but even now it is ours by right and privilege. Whatever grace we read about, that belongs to us as believers. Have you spoken about it to your Father? Whatever the Spirit can give, you may ask for. Listen to Paul's words in the eighth of Romans, 'Who is he that condemneth?' Look at the robe I have got by going for it ! Who will condemn me? 'Nay, I am "more than conqueror !"' He is waving his palm as well as wearing his white robe. Can you say this? You say 'I contrive to keep the enemy back.' But you should be 'more than conqueror.' I don't wonder that Peter says we ought to have more grace than we have. 'Add to your faith,' etc. Why do we not get it? Suppose one of Jacob's sons had come back from Egypt with only a small sackful of corn, and his father says to him, 'Is that all you have got?' 'Yes, all.' 'Had he no more to give? Did he grudge it?' 'No, but that was all I asked for.' Another of Jacob's sons comes with full sacks of corn. He needs six asses to carry them. 'How did you get them all?' 'Just as my brother here got his little sackful. I asked for them.' A good old Puritan says, 'Each tribe got only one blessing, but every believer may get every spiritual blessing.'

5.Every blessing comes out of Christ to us. - We come and have fellowship with Christ, and while we are holding fellowship with Him, He is dropping grace for grace into our heart. Have you not often come away from fellowship with Him finding that every grace was enlivened? It is a very humbling subject this. Why have we not taken possession of the whole land when we have a grant of it? How few of these spiritual blessings we really have ! To think that God is so liberal and generous, and we have often such hard thoughts about Him, as if He were not dealing kindly with us ! Do we prize these blessings much? The subject is very encouraging too. If we do in earnest desire to have these blessings they are all 'in Christ.' 'Our life is hid (deposited) with Christ in God,' and if we would go and knock at the treasury door we would get what is waiting for us. Prayer and communion will lead us to appropriate these spiritual blessings.

Chapter 100

S. Angel Workers

Angel Workers

What I write is not a vision, nor a dream; it is an allegory of its kind. You will follow me into another region, to a spot where angels are gathered together in quiet, happy converse. They are all ' ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation' (Hebrews 1:14); but they are creatures, and so they need intervals of rest. They, as well as we, find ' iron sharpeneth iron.' Let me tell you my visit to one of these meetings, held under the shadow of that Throne whereon sitteth the 'Angel of the Covenant,' who cared for Hagar, visited Abraham, wrestled with Jacob, spoke in the Burning Bush. On the right hand of that Throne, just where one arm of the emerald Rainbow dipt downwards, a group of these ministering spirits were met to speak of the past, and prepare for coming work. I got entrance into their circle, and they received me with great respect and glowing kindness, not for anything in myself, but for my work's sake and my Master's, I being on earth an 'Angel' of a Church of Christ, serving the same Lord whom they so loved and served.

Seated among them, I was allowed to listen and learn. Only a few spoke. It would have been most interesting to have heard anything from the two compassionate Angels who, in hurrying Lot and his family out of Sodom, taught us to 'pull men out of the fire.' But nothing fell from their lips, nor from any of the Mahanaim host (Genesis 32:2), who could have told of Jacob's timely comforts; nor from the Angel who delivered Daniel from the lions; nor yet from the affable Angel with whom the Prophet Zechariah became so familiar. The notes I give, however, are a few recollections of what passed, and these bearing on things that concern us here below, in our sphere of service.

I The first who spoke was the irresistible Angel who, on the night of the Passover, was sent forth to destroy the firstborn of Egypt (Hebrews 11:28). He referred to that service as something very terrible, almost too terrible; but he was upheld by the discovery he got of the glory of divine justice taking vengeance on sin. Glorious justice! how bright it shone forth in every stroke of his sword. Nor less was he revived when his eye from time to time turned to the blood-sprinkled lintels and door-posts of Israel, where grace was seen saving its thousands at the cost of divinely precious atonement, set forth in the blood of the Paschal Lamb. 'Angel of the Church of Finnieston (said he to me), tell your flock—never fail to tell and tell again—the justice of God, and, at the same time, the power of the blood which God has provided. Tell both unceasingly, that the justice may send souls to the blood and our God be glorified in the highest, when "a thousand fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand," but the sword comes not nigh to those whose lintels and door-posts are sprinkled.'

II

He sat down. And there rose up one like him in aspect, every way as majestic and mighty, yet very solemn and calm. It was the angel who smote the host of Sennacherib, an hundred and eighty-five thousand in one night, using the drawn sword that once threatened death to Jerusalem (1

Chronicles 21:16). He pictured the scene of exuberant and boisterous mirth in the Assyrian tents; their boastful exultation, as they fancied themselves already in the Temple; and then how the revelry died away, and sleep stole over them. How easy it was for him to go forth on his work! He needed only to flash his sword, and the heart of every sleeper was still for ever. 'But (said he) most dreadful was that scene of death, needing all the relief afforded by the blessed sight of believing Jerusalem at rest in the everlasting arms. As I passed Hezekiah's palace, how unutterably sweet it was to hear low-breathed words of calm confidence in our Jehovah! How peaceful were the dwellings of Jerusalem! O Angel of the Church of Finnieston, when you return, tell your flock what simple faith in our Jehovah wins. Tell anxious ones to look upon the blood of the mercy-seat, as did that king and his people, and use continually the appeal of simple faith.'

III When he had finished, another rose who prefaced what he was about to say by looking to me (as they all did, in their brotherly, familiar kindness) and stating who he was. 'I am the Angel who was sent to stop the false prophet Balaam on his way to curse Israel. It seemed a very small matter, scarcely requiring an Angel to be despatched from heaven to earth; but I joyfully went forth when my Lord called. And soon it appeared that had that man gone on to pronounce his withering curse, Israel would have had no courage to fight; Israel would not have entered the land; the promise to the seed of Abraham would have failed; Messiah would not have come; your world would have been unredeemed! Go and tell your flock the importance of a small service. Tell parents and teachers that to arrest evil, in the case of even one soul, may turn out to have been an inestimable blessing to the whole world.'

IV And now one rose who seemed the very ideal of angelic grace and kindness—the Angel who did that service, in the wilderness of Beersheba, to Elijah under the juniper-tree. He extolled the grace of his Lord and ours in delicately and tenderly reproving, while upholding, the desponding man of God. He rejoiced to relate how grace shone forth that day, when the peevishness of Elijah was twice requited by most seasonable refreshment, sent by Him who would take no notice of His servant's infirmity in praying for death; for his God meant to take him up ere long to be Enoch's companion, without tasting death. When he had finished his brief story, his eye fell on me; and to me this message was intrusted. 'Angel of the Church of Finnieston, bid any who work for the Lord, but who have become desponding, and have thought of working no more, because success seems to be so inadequate, bid them remember that day of which I speak. And see that thou thyself dost not lose temper with them; whereas thou shouldst rather carry to them, as I did to the prophet, the food and the water that will revive even a peevish worker's heart.'

V

I saw next a mighty Angel prepare to speak, one whose name I soon learnt. But I should remark that for the most part I could not catch the names of almost any. They did not seem to care to be known individually by any one but their Lord. What a lesson (I thought) to some workers among us, who, unless they be spoken of, and their names made prominent, will not persevere in what they undertake. I saw there is no such sinful sensitiveness, no such ambition in that holy heaven!

It was Gabriel who stood up now. With clear, full voice, that often quivered with joyous emotion, he told of his privilege in being the messenger sent to Daniel, 'the man greatly beloved,' to make known the time of the appearing of the Saviour, who was to finish transgression, make an end of sin, and bring in Everlasting Righteousness. With that eloquence that is peculiar (1 Corinthians

13:1) to an angelic tongue, and to one who is high among them, 'standing before God,' he went on to describe his second visit to earth on the same errand, when sent to the Temple of Jerusalem to announce the birth of Messiah's forerunner. But oh, how he was moved when next he related his mission to Nazareth, in which he announced to Mary that she was the mother of the Word made flesh! He did not, however, dwell upon his own feelings; the subject seemed too great even for him. 'But (said he ere he closed), Angel of the Church of Finnieston, we desire to look into your blessings, amid all our joys. O tell your Elders, and all among your flock who try to proclaim the love of God in sending His Son, that to us their privilege seems the highest that a creature can enjoy! To have such news to proclaim! It passes knowledge!'

VI

Scarcely had he ended, when the subject was taken up by that favoured Angel who brought the tidings to the shepherds at Bethlehem, 'To you is born a Saviour, Christ, the Lord,' while the glory of the Lord shone round about. 'Perhaps (he began) I may say my privilege was greater than Gabriel's, for I am the only one of our number who ever preached the Gospel! Oh, it is sweet to sound the silver trumpet! When I was done with my brief message, how happy I thought the shepherds in being permitted to go everywhere and tell it all to their friends and neighbours. O Angel of a Church on earth, bid all your flock who know the ',Wonderful, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace,' go among their friends and neighbours as these shepherds gladly did. Nor forget to carry a word to those in your congregation who lead the song, and to all in the flock (for surely they all join in the song, every one?), regarding the praise they offer. The multitude of the heavenly host, who joined me on that night almost ere I was done with my message, have often since declared that never did they find themselves so lifted up and blessed, as in singing to Him who sent His Son, and singing with their eye on Him who had come down to obey and suffer and die for sinners.'

He was about to close, when once more his eye fell on me, and he added, 'O son of man, you may have in your flock some who have your world's goods, which they might dedicate to their Lord and Saviour's use. A few days after that memorable night, when carrying a message to Joseph, who was still at Bethlehem (Matthew 2:19), 1 saw the wise men who had been worshipping at the feet of Christ the Lord, and who had gladly offered gifts, because their hearts were melted and moved and won at the sight of Incarnate Love. Use that argument, O man of God, whenever you would thaw the icy heart of any one among your flock who gives little to Him who gave all for him. Tell your Deacons to use it, if they would open hearts; and let them enjoin their Collectors to employ this argument, which prevails when all others fail.'

VII A pause followed. I half expected to hear something from those Angels who 'came and ministered' to the Lord after the forty days' temptation, I hoped in my own mind that, in that case, I should have been able to tell at least the joy of our heavenly brethren not only in taking charge over us 'lest we dash our foot against a stone,' but also in witnessing our success in times of temptation, when we overcome Satan 'by the blood of the Lamb and the word of His testimony.' But it seemed as if they were afraid lest we should look to them for the ministry of refreshment in hours of trial, rather than to the Holy Ghost, whose it is to anoint the overcomers 'with the oil of gladness.' As I was thus musing, one rose in whose utterance was an indescribable solemnity. He told of what work he had done on earth. This was the Angel who had strengthened the Lord Jesus

in His agony in Gethsemane (Luke 22:43). 'O Angel of yonder Church on earth (said he), say to your Communicants—If they had been there! if they had seen one of the great drops of blood that fell on the cold ground! or one tear on that holy countenance, so marred and worn more than any man's! or had heard one groan, as He cried, "Abba, Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from Me!" they would surely come to the Communion-table with awful reverence and wonder, their tears dropt into the cup of blessing, and the broken bread wet with the weeping of grateful love. Redemption money, what a price! Redeeming love, unfathomable! O Redeemer of men! for ever be honour and glory and blessing and thanksgiving to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb!'

VIII By this time the fervour of the angelic assembly was gloriously intense. Everything about our Redeemer was evidently as interesting to them as to me. And forthwith the theme was continued; for the next speaker was the Angel who rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre (Matthew 28:2). 'I was bidden that morning to put on the brightest robe in heaven, white as the snow, and my countenance was made to shine like the lightning, on which no man could gaze. I was to be employed in some very great work that day. Soon I learnt that what was required of me was to go down to your world, and, in Joseph's garden, roll away a stone from the door of the sepulchre of your Lord and ours. Was this a work worthy of an Angel's powers, and of one so arrayed in glory? Angel of yonder Church on earth, tell your people that to do the least service to the Lord of Glory is an inconceivable privilege and joy. Let it be known to your Church-Officer let it be known to those who "keep a door" in God's house, as well as all who carry a cup of cold water to the sick, or sew garments for the poor, that no moment in my past life in heaven was to me half so sweet as was that time I sat on the rolled-away stone. I was rewarded by seeing Him come forth, breaking the bands of death; a sight so glorious that no words could describe it to men. My task was very simple: the day before two men had rolled that stone to its place, and yet this was my reward! O the joy of working for the Lord of glory! O the bliss of being permitted to serve Him in the commonest and easiest duty!'

IX

I had no more than time to note down this message, when two, who had been sitting at my side, rose as if they would like to speak. They were clothed in white raiment, and were very joyous. They seemed to me the 'Peter and John' of their company. Whether or not they were the same who were seen in the sepulchre of Christ, sitting, one at the head, the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain, I did not learn, though somehow I understood this to be the case. Both of these made as though they would have spoken; but one gave place to the other, and, as he did so, whispered to me, 'Have not your feet stood on the Mount of Olives?' 'Yes,' I said, 'and though it is now more than thirty years ago, I never can forget that hill and its olive-trees.' 'And you were at Bethany, and you will remember well the slope down the hill that leads toward that favoured spot? It was there I and my brother Angel stood on the day he is about to speak of.' Upon this I turned to listen; and that other Angel told how, on the day of the Ascension, just when the wondrous procession was moving toward the Throne, and the glorified humanity of the Lord Jesus was beginning to light up heaven with transcendent brightness—just when the interest and rapture of the heavenly hosts had risen to a height beyond what was ever known before—a sign was made to himself and his brother Angel to leave the hosts and turn down to earth, to the Mount of Olives, that there they might deliver a brief message to eleven disciples, sorrowing because their Master

had been taken from their head, at the moment when they had begun to hope that the kingdom He had taught them to look for was about to appear. 'We were (he added) for a moment startled; we almost fancied that this duty, even if very urgent, might, at any rate, have been devolved on one only, and so two need not have missed being present at that scene which can never occur again in the history of the universe, when the hosts of Angels and the redeemed around the throne witnessed the Father's welcome to His Beloved Son returning from redemption finished. O to have heard, "Sit down at My right hand!" But tell it on earth, O man of God, that forthwith we remembered His holy will! our rising regret had gone, and we went forth, our soul overflowing with delight, and with new and rarest joy. If any of your flock be at times tempted to think hardly of their all-wise God when He detains them from the Sanctuary and the Communion-table, let them know there is a joy quite peculiar and most satisfying given to those who work for God in self-denying service, or who can acquiesce in His ways. Forget not also to remind all mourners that the tender sympathy of your Lord and ours is such that, amid His own glory (glory above measure glorious !), and in the rapturous hour of welcome to the right hand, He would comfort His sorrowing ones, and point them to the day when He shall return to wipe away all tears. And not less plainly, also, did we see that day, the Holy Ghost, the promised Comforter, in the greatness of His love, anticipate the day of Pentecost, by letting fall some drops of the oil of gladness upon the bereaved disciples.'

X

Excepting Gabriel - (as I noticed before), no one of the assembly seemed to be marked out from each other by names. All were ready to serve unnoticed by their fellows. It was no wonder, therefore, that no name was given when the Angel who had been directed to go to Samaria, and send Philip away from that city to the road which led to Gaza (Acts 8:26),said a few things about that mission. 'I learnt again that day the deep lesson of Jehovah's sovereignty. Sometime before, one of our number, when he was sent to set free the twelve Apostles (Acts 5:19), was bidden tell them to "Go and preach all the words of this life," but was not allowed himself to proclaim these words. And so it was in my own case now. I was not commissioned to give one ray of light to the Ethiopian eunuch in his sadness, but was simply bidden draw Philip away to a desert road, to meet one man, at a time when his hands were full of work in a crowded city. After delivering my message I lingered near. The Spirit directed him to go up to the chariot, and explain to the Ethiopian inquirer the words about the Lamb led to the slaughter. O man of God, when you or any of your flock are dealing with an anxious soul, remember that day. All was still on the dusty road to Gaza; all was solemn and calm in the tone of Philip; there was deep earnestness, but no boisterous energy. He set forth the simple and clear truth about the Son of God who had come to be the sin-bearer. As he was telling the story of God-man led as a lamb to the slaughter, "the Just suffering for the unjust," it pleased the Holy Spirit to touch the heart of the Ethiopian; the scales fell from his eyes. He was filled with joy—and I hastened up to my place in heaven, to share the joy which fills the heavenly courts when one sinner repenteth.'

XI

I now wondered in myself what might be the next word from the lips of these Angel workers. It was from the Angel who had been despatched to Jerusalem to open the prison and set Peter free. Reference was made to Cornelius at Caesarea (Acts 10:3), but I cannot be sure that he was the same who carried the answer of prayer to that Gentile centurion. However that may be, referring to

both Cornelius and Peter, he did not fail, for my sake, to dwell upon the power of prayer, and the honour put upon it. 'Let the Lord's remembrancers know what we have been sent to do because they prayed. One man at Caesarea prayed and was heard. At Jerusalem, a little band united in the cry (Acts 12:5, Acts 12:7, Acts 12:13); and let the youngest be often reminded that that little maid Rhoda's believing expectation was of no small importance in winning the answer.' Had time permitted he would have gone on; and would probably have told about his being sent to complete the answer to the prayer, by cutting off proud Herod in the noonday of his pride.

XII

There was evidently an understanding among the gathered Angels that their hour of conference was near a close. But they were all, desirous, in the exuberance of their brotherly love, that I should listen to Michael the Archangel, the leader of their host, whose very name is his banner, and declares his burning zeal for his Lord: for his name signifies, 'Who is like God?' On rising to close the meeting, he made allusion to events in his past errands to our world, such as his contending with the Devil for the body of Moses, the man of God; but, instead of dwelling on any of these, he took up another theme. His Lord and ours had made known to him a great work in prospect, which was ever present to his thoughts, viz., not only that he was to stand up for Israel in the Latter Day (Daniel 12:1), but that he should be sent to our world, to sound the Last Trumpet at the Coming of Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:16). 'What a day (said he) that will be! O man of God, think often and much about it as I do, and lead others to think on it much. You will forget all toil and weariness and care and trial on that day! The workers among you, the sowers who went out weeping, bearing precious seed, shall then have their day of reaping, and their bosom filled with sheaves. The trumpet shall sound and the Son of God shall speak (John 5:25), and the dead in Christ shall rise, and the living saints be changed, a multitude whom no man can number, in resurrection-glory, and strength, and beauty, bearing the image of the heavenly! There are many mansions in New Jerusalem; and my brother Angel here, who once led the beloved John through New Jerusalem, declares that such is the glory of the place that he scarcely wondered when the bewildered disciple fell twice at his feet as if he would worship him. "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered the heart of man what your God has prepared for those that wait for Him." The city He has prepared for them is worthy of the God of grace and of glory. Angel of yonder Church on earth, hasten on to that day, and call on all your flock to hasten unto it, looking for the City, whose builder and maker is God, and for the Bright Morning Star. We are to be with Him when He comes down to you that day; we are to gather His elect from the four winds, and then stand round you, beholding the glory and the rapturous joy, and joining in your Songs of Jubilee. Peace, peace be with you till that hour when we shall meet again. The time is not revealed; "of that day and hour knoweth no man, neither the Angels in heaven." We understand, indeed, that now it is very near; but it shall come as a thief. Meanwhile, my beloved brother, be "steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."'

Chapter 101

S. Bless the Lord, O my soul!

Bless the Lord, O my soul!

Psalms 103:1-5 IN this psalm we find the Psalmist standing at the golden altar with his harp in his hand, recounting all his mercies. This psalm teaches us adoration. Adoration is not thanksgiving; it is silent wonder. I once saw a striking instance of this in a sick one, who said to me, 'I got such a sight of the Lord Jesus ■ His wonderful Person■His finished work■that at last I was obliged to stop giving thanks, and just look, look, look!' Adoration is wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, and it is very sanctifying when He gives us such moments of nearness to Himself. Looking on Him at such times we cannot say, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul!' we can only gaze and wonder. Praise is a little lower down Pisgah. Adoration is higher, nearer the upper sky. It is more than apostolic, it is angelic; for the angels say, 'Glory to Him who sitteth upon the throne.' It is the feeling of a soul under God's afflicting hand, to whom God has given great sanctification. 'Blessed be the name of the Lord. He gives, and He takes away.' That is adoration. This psalm is a call to praise 'His holy name.' His 'doings' come after. His holy name is the fountainhead; His doings, the streams from Lebanon. We are called to praise Him because

I. He forgiveth all our iniquities. ■ Our first true acquaintance with God is when He pardons us. Manasseh ■that awful sinner■that man who leaned over hell■ who spoke with the devil, and would not speak with God■that man was brought to know the Lord, and when He had forgiven him, 'then Manasseh knew that the Lord He was God.' What we need is a God who can take away our sins. 'All thine iniquities.' He does not leave a single sin resting on the conscience; the blood that cleanseth one sin cleanseth all. For our sins are linked together, one great awful chain round our soul, and God takes hold of the first link, and so casts the whole chain 'into the depths of the sea.' We need not wonder that the Psalmist puts this first, 'Who forgiveth all thine iniquities.' Looking up to-day to the Lord Jesus are we not saying, 'In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace'?

II. He healeth all our diseases. ■ This may refer to bodily as well as to spiritual healing. I like to think in connection with this of the palsied man brought by his four friends to Jesus, and Jesus looking on him, and saying, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.' Then a few minutes after, 'Rise, take up thy bed and walk.' When God takes away our sin He does not forget our bodily trouble. He may not heal us completely, but He takes the sting out of the disease. He has given us a pillow for our aching head in giving us pardon, and He whispers in our ear, 'This chastisement is that you may be partaker of My holiness.' This is the fire that is to melt away the dross. After pardon He gives healing of the soul's diseases. 'Sin shall not have dominion over you.' It is in the repeated use of the forgiving blood, day by day, that we mortify our corruptions, just as it is by the blood that we quench the fiery darts of the devil. When they touch the blood they are quenched. As it is 'all thine iniquities,' so it is 'all thy diseases.' There is not a corruption over which He will not give you victory.

III. He redeemeth our life from destruction.■We are ’kept by the mighty power of God.’ We every day escape dangers that we are not aware of. Is it not a beautiful touch in Jeremiah 2:6, where God says to Israel, that He took care of him when he was going through the wilderness, ’a land of deserts and of pits.’ Israel was skirting the margin of these pits as the Pillar-Cloud led him along■a picture of how we are led. How we shall praise Him yet for all His deliverances! If we but saw the snares Satan lays for us spiritually, how we would adore the Lord who enables us to escape them all! How often the devil tries to make us unwatchful, or gives us false peace, but God is watching over us, and He redeems our spiritual life from these spiritual injuries.

IV. He crowneth us with loving-kindness.■Providential supplies all the way as we journey on, putting a crown of tender mercies and loving-kindness round our head. We are wearing it, and perhaps do not know that we are. Look at the comforts of your lot. Think of the spiritual mercies of your life. ’Bless the Lord, O my soul!’ Is He not satisfying your mouth with good things? When you were going to become a backslider He restored your soul. He fulfilled His promise that ’they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength,’ and the earth looked very small as you ascended on eagles’ wings. ’Forget not all His benefits.’ There is a great deal of unbelief implied in forgetting. Faith has a good memory, unbelief forgets. Let us ask the Lord to give us better memories for all His benefits, that we may fix our minds on His grace, in spite of all that may happen to us.

’Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits!’

Chapter 102

S. Christ's Silence (1)

Christ’s Silence (1).

’A time to keep silence and a time to speak’

Ecclesiastes 3:7 We can draw a great deal of instruction from Christ’s silence.

’Let Christ’s word and silence too Dwell in thy heart,’ a Moravian hymn says. Silence as to things we would like to know about Christ is a different thing from Christ Himself keeping silence. Do we ever in the four Gospels find Christ calling any man Lord? Never. He carried about with Him the constant consciousness of His divinity. Isaac is the type of the silent Christ. Let us notice two instances of Christ’s silence.

I. His silence at Nazareth for thirty years.■There was no noise made about His coming into the world. He slipped into it we may say, until a choir of angels made it known. A few weeks after, we hear the tramp of Herod’s horsemen, and we see the babe fleeing into Egypt. Then we hear nothing of Him (with one exception) for thirty years. This Plant of renown grew up silently before the Lord, and spread out His branches to be suffused with divine fragrance. He did all for God only, and this is true service for child or man. He broke the silence once that He might tell us what He was engaged in. ’Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?’ Christ never refers to these thirty years. Why did He keep silence? To teach us the real nature of obedience. Is it not doing everything under God’s eye and for Him, not drawing the attention of others to what we are, and to what we are doing? He was teaching us to be content with the Father’s approval, that the way to please the Lord is by our obedience. Is God’s approval enough for you though all men should ignore you or even despise you? Christ lived for thirty years with the two tables of the law unbroken. Learn to take in much of Christ’s obedience into your thoughts. It claims for us merit, and we have by it a claim to the favour of God. There is a lesson here for afflicted ones. What if they are giving the best obedience by their quiet suffering? They are doing the hardest thing that any one can be sent to do. These thirty years ended at Christ’s baptism, when the heavens were opened and the voice said, ’This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased’ ■the Father’s seal to His thirty years’ obedience.

II. His silence at the marriage in Cana.■He says nothing to the guests, as we would have expected Him to do. Sitting in the midst of them the first of His miracles is done in silence. He spoke by His presence. A good man’s presence in a company may be a great blessing, if his presence is also the presence of the Master. As Christ sat there He silently changed the water into wine.

’God spake once when He all things made, But saved us when He nothing said.’

We may apply these words to this miracle. What a ray of divinity there was in it! He can think and it is done, as well as speak and it is done. There is no noise in the sunrise in the morning, but there is a burst of light! Christ was teaching the secret of power. It is the presence of the Lord that is the

secret of power. It is that we need in order to have blessing. In providence He likes to work in silence. There is no voice in the affliction, but there is in the very silence of it. It is the Lord's way to make us think upon divine things when He means to give us blessing. 'He has made His wonderful works to be thought upon.' He works in this way still in convincing of sin and righteousness. Real conviction comes when the soul is quietly alone with God. No one in the church knows what you are feeling, but the Lord is working in the might of His divinity. We are to stand under the cross and look at the Crucified One. 'Behold Me! Behold Me!' A striking picture makes us silent while looking at it, but what after-thoughts it may rouse in us! So looking quietly on the Lord Jesus the water may be changed into wine, the hard heart will be melted!

Chapter 103

S. Christ's Silence (2)

Christ’s Silence (2).

’Have I not held my peace even of old, and thou fearest me not?

Isaiah 57:11

IT is, as we would say, an old custom of God’s to keep silence when we would have expected Him to speak. Of old God’s silence was meant to lead men to fear. We need not wonder that when Christ came He acted in the same way.

I. Christ’s silence in receiving sinners.■The woman who washed His feet with her tears was a great sinner, a notorious sinner, so much so that Simon wondered He could let her touch Him. Christ did not speak about her sins. He allowed her in silence to come and weep at His feet. There was no ’casting up’ of her old sins, no upbraiding. Without His speaking a word she knew she was forgiven. All this woman’s sins■and they were many■He dropped into the deep, and welcomed her to Himself. Does He not do this to us? The fountain opened for sin washes sin away, but there is no voice in the waters. In silence the waters wash the soul. Christ ’held His peace,’ and the woman ’feared’ Him. Had He upbraided her, her heart might have been broken by sorrow, but would she have been drawn to Him? His silent gentleness drew her with the cords of love. Look at the woman we read of in the eighth of John. When Christ had heard what her accusers said He turned away, and stooping down, began to write on the ground as if to give a silent rebuke to them. When He lifted Himself up and looked at them, He did not say one upbraiding word to the woman, but a searching word to those round her. When He looked up the second time her accusers had all disappeared. Then He said to the woman, ’I do not pronounce condemnation on thee, but pardon. Go, and sin no more.’ He did not rebuke her. He was there as the Sin-bearer, and in the very act of saying ’Go, and sin no more,’ He was casting her sins into the depths of the sea, and giving her the power to sin no more. It was not because her sin was small. It was because it was such that He turned away His eyes from her, that He hastened to cast it into the depths of the sea. He took it on Himself and so put it out of sight of God and man. It is so with Him still. You may take your sin to Him at once, and He will not reproach you. He will not upbraid you. He will ’in no wise cast you out.’ Some of you may think that God does not notice your sin. Do you not know that God is silent that He may give you time for repentance? There will be a day when He will ’speak out,’ as there has been a time when He has kept silence.

II. Christ’s silence in dealing with His disciples.■He did not hasten to speak. It is one thing that can be said of Christ, though it cannot be said of all His disciples, He was not censorious. How He kept silence is remarkable. How often His disciples did inconsistent, stupid things through ignorance, and the worst that Christ said to them was, ’O ye of little faith.’ Sometimes He did not speak at all, but only by a sigh showed that He was vexed.

We don’t do much good by speaking too much about the faults of others. If we could learn Christ’s solemn way of speaking a little, we would be much more likely to reach our end. He never talked to

others about the faults of His disciples, and, when others tried to find fault with them, He was very quick to defend them. When they were blamed for plucking the ears of corn, He interposed and gave a defence for them. When they were blamed for not fasting, He gave good reasons why they should not. When 'they all forsook Him and fled', He was not offended in them. We never read of His upbraiding them. When Peter denied Him did He utter a word of reproach? He only gave Him a look that was silent, but how it touched Peter's soul! When He said to Him by the Sea of Galilee three times 'Lovest thou Me?' there was evidently an allusion to his thrice-repeated denial. Doubtless Peter longed to have Him speak of it, that he might have the opportunity of confessing his sin and being forgiven. But Christ never said more about it than that. When He speaks about His disciples in the seventeenth of John, you would think these men were faultless! He says they have kept His word, they have believed on Him, they are not of the world, even as He is not. He never speaks of their failures, He just speaks of their faith. O believer, what a Saviour you have! How He will hide all your sins, and speak only of your faith to the Father. It is not that He does not see wherein you fail, but it is just His exceeding loving-kindness. The very height of this is seen in His dealings with the beloved John. Never man had a sorer heart than John when he came back and stood at the Cross for some hours before his Master died. John, who used to lay his head on Christ's bosom, had forsaken Him and fled! But Christ has not a word of rebuke for him. He looks upon him, and before the end comes He says to him, 'There is My mother; she is your mother now. Take her home with you. I forgive you, I can trust you, John.' Such is grace. If it were not that we know all this, I don't know how we could take our places in glory before the throne. Our worst sin will be completely gone, and no holy angel will be more welcome than we will be!

Chapter 104

S. Christ's Silence (3)

Christ’s Silence (3).

Matthew 11:1-11

JOHN the Baptist lay in prison unnoticed, and we may say uncared for, for nearly a year. How mysterious! No wonder he sent to ask the Master if there was any explanation of this. ’Art Thou He that should come? Is this like the Messiah?’ Christ’s answer to the disciples of John was, ’Tell your master what I am doing, and have been doing. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed.’ With this message they were dismissed, only that the Master said as they left, ’Tell John not to be stumbled at My dealings with him. Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me.’ Infer from other things, not from circumstances, how you stand toward the Lord, and how He stands toward you. Learn the heart of the Lord by what He has done for you. Think of Him who gave Himself for us, and trust Him. Never distrust the Father, never distrust the Son, but confide in their wisdom and lovingkindness. Wait till you see the end of all affliction. Learn to read your title to the family of God by what God has said, not by a special message to yourself. It would be so satisfactory to us if we could get an individual message from the Lord; but He does not do this. He did not do it to John the Baptist. Notice particularly:

I. The circumstances of John’s death.■The one incident we hear of in John’s imprisonment is the message sent by his disciples. It is curious that at the very time John was in prison, Christ sent out His twelve disciples to preach. He left His Forerunner in prison and sent out the twelve! ’Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me.’ There John lies in prison,■the man who came in the spirit and power of Elijah, but no chariot of fire carried him upward without tasting death. No, he sank in loneliness into the grave. Yet there had not arisen ’a greater prophet than John the Baptist.’ Who is the man who is greater than others? The man who has most of Christ in his heart. This is God’s test. What place has Christ in your heart? That will determine how you stand before God. You may be neglected, you may pass through the world, and the world may not take much notice of you, and God’s people may not. God may give you the treatment He gave to the Baptist. Instead of letting him think he deserved any honour at the hand of the Lord, the Lord was emptying him of self and putting him on the level of other sinners. It was just as He did with Moses. The man who wrought such wonders might have been tempted to think he stood upon a higher footing than the people of Israel. So when he sinned, God made him feel it was the sin of a highly-favoured man; it was more than an ordinary sin. So he was self-emptied. God may use a man to do great things, but that does not give him any merit. It gives him responsibility.

II. Christ’s silence regarding John’s death.■’The disciples went and told Jesus.’ He said nothing, He made no mourning. They mourned thirty days for Aaron, but when the greatest of the prophets died there was no mourning. There was always meaning in Christ’s silence, as there was at Bethany. It was not that He felt little, but because His heart was full. ’Come ye yourselves apart into the desert-place,’ He says, ’and let us talk over it, and think over it.’ But He said nothing more. He did not send any threatening message to Herod. He left him without a word. He gave him up. It

is not a man's death that is so important in Christ's eyes. It is his life and his resurrection. John in his prison heard the sound of mirth and revelry above him in the palace, when suddenly he is ushered into the presence of his Lord, and hears the songs of the redeemed above! The head that was so mocked is now crowned with glory. Whatever may happen to you in another year, will you be able so to trust the love of the Lord? Though you should be in abject poverty, or in bodily pain, still you will be able to say with Paul, 'I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day.'

III. Christ's thoughts of John.■John's death is like Abel's, silent, lonely, unheeded. Yet Jesus calls him 'righteous Abel.' It is like Antipas in Pergamos, condemned, put to death; and God says, 'My faithful martyr.' He says of John, 'He was a burning and a shining light.' He says, 'It was not for nothing you went out■not to see the reeds by the Jordan■no, you sought a man worth seeing. You saw a real prophet, the greatest of them all.' The prophet prophesied of by Malachi! And remember you may be greater than he in the coming kingdom of glory; you in heaven may be greater than he on earth.

He says of John's influence, 'From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence,' etc. (Matthew 11:12), such was the earnestness he awakened, such vehement desire. And his shall be the honour (Daniel 12:3).

He says of the peculiar fulness of his preaching (Matthew 11:13-14 and Luke 16:16), all others only foretold what was coming. He stood and pointed out the reality come. He preached the King and the Gospel of the kingdom. He says, in a word, that he was truly an Elias. In him the prophecy of Malachi 4:5 had got a first fulfilment. How Christ's heart toward John is seen in these words! Ah, is not this the way He will speak of each faithful one at His coming? 'Well done, good and faithful servant!' 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!'

Chapter 105

S. Closing address on Communion Sabbath, January 27, 1889

Closing address on Communion Sabbath, January 27, 1889.

'When He is come, He will tell us all things'

John 4:25 You must have noticed some great and memorable sayings in the New Testament which were spoken unwittingly.

'This man receiveth sinners' (Luke 15:2); 'It is expedient that one man should die for the people' (John 11:50); 'He saved others, Himself He cannot save' (Matthew 27:42); 'This is the King of the Jews' (Luke 23:38). So here we have a saying of a Samaritan woman, and a very important saying. They expected a Prophet (Deuteronomy 18:5); for they did not acknowledge these passages in Isaiah, etc., where Messiah is depicted as suffering and dying.

We this day have been thinking of His office as Priest, and of His Sacrifice, and often we think of Him as King and Giver of gifts. But let us at present think of Him as Prophet, and take up the woman's true saying,■only let us apply it to His Second Coming to-day, and let us see how Christ will then 'execute His office as Prophet.'

He will come in glory; we shall be with Him in His Kingdom. New Jerusalem is described as at once a City and a Paradise. We shall have many walks with Him, for He 'shall dwell among them;' and then it is we shall find John 13:7 and John 11:40 fully fulfilled. He will open out the meaning of providences that seemed dark, personal, and public. 'He will tell us all things about Himself.' It will be as when on the Transfiguration hill they 'talked with Him,' and as Moses when up in the Mount for forty days and forty nights.

Christ is the Prophet who 'by His Word and Spirit' reveals God's will. In that day we shall know the Word in all its meaning. He will open out to us its darkest places. He will explain to us Ezekiel's Temple, the genealogies of 1 Chron. etc., and show us the divine purpose in all. He will show us 'the mystery of God finished,' and as, in 2 Peter 1:19, the 'Word of prophecy' was to be 'till the Daystar rise,' so now He Himself shall be our Bible.

O then, even because of this hope, hasten on to that day! He will clear up all difficulties about texts, doctrines, trying providences in our lot, and we shall say like Job (Job 42:3), 'I have opened my mouth without knowledge. I have uttered . . . . things too wonderful for me.'

Hasten on, for even this Feast we keep to-day with elements of bread and wine only till the better come, namely Himself. So we study the Word and Ordinances and are changed thereby (2 Corinthians 3:18) only till He Himself come, when at once (1 John 3:2) 'we shall be like Him.' On that day shall Isaiah 29:18 be accomplished: 'The deaf shall hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity,' for the fulness of the Holy Ghost shall be in us from Him.

Hasten on, for then will (Revelation 7:17) these 'fountains of living waters' be ours; discoveries of God's name and heart; verses like John 3:16 shall be opened up to us. There is much in Revelation 3:12 to excite expectation.

Hasten on. The day is near. Keep in mind the signs of the times: the ending of the twelve hundred and sixty days at hand, 'distress of nations with perplexity,' the three unclean spirits, the running to and fro of many, knowledge increased, the Gospel preached to all nations. The time of the end is near.

O workers,■elders, teachers, missionaries,■He will tell you the fruit of your labours then, though now you often say, 'I have laboured in vain.'

O sinner, quickly come to Him, whose death we have shown to-day. There is 'no salvation' otherwise. He will receive you, and your soul will be enlarged and taught by our Prophet in the 'ages to come.' If you do not, you will be degraded in the scale of being when your former friends are above angels; all because you would not take the key that opens the door, Christ Himself. 'If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.'

Satan's great aim is to blind you to this till it is too late.

S. Coming to Christ

Coming to Christ. The natural man is exceedingly perverse, and Satan knows how to wield this perversity of the heart. We, in our day, are ready to excuse ourselves for slowness to believe in the Lord Jesus by saying, 'How much easier it would have been, had we seen Him in the flesh, and been with Him when he wrought His gracious works, and when He spoke His words that were such as never man spake!' Now, in reality, they who then lived had by far the greater difficulties in the way of their faith. One whom no man honoured claims this service, - 'Follow me.' One whom man despiseth says, 'I and the Father are one.' That rejected One, the bye-word among the people, the song of the drunkard, stands in the temple and cries, 'If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink!' and promises, 'He that believeth in me, out of him shall flow rivers of living water!' In those days, the difficulty felt by His hearers, and by His very disciples, was to believe without a doubt that this was the right person; this Jesus the real Immanuel, the Saviour of the world. To these men there seems never to have occurred the thought that there that there was difficulty in the act of coming, or in knowing what coming to Him meant; the difficulty they felt was the being sure that Jesus was the Christ. Only let that point be settled, and their souls are at rest.

Such was the state of things then. But now it is altered. Satan has shifted his ground, and tries to puzzle us with the questions, 'How are we to come?' and 'What is meant by coming to Christ? We are in the habit of admitting that Christ's claims are beyond dispute; that He is God-man, and sent by the Father to be the propitiation for our sins. The reproach heaped on Him when first He came is so far rolled away, that all professing disciples agree in never doubting for a moment (as they suppose) that Christ, and no other, is the Saviour to whom they are to come. But then the natural heart finds out a new hindrance in the way of at once resting satisfied in Him. 'What do you mean by coming ?' is a question often asked and dwelt upon and many a soul says, 'If I only knew how to come aright, I would rejoice!'

Let us, then, ask what is the true state of the case ; whether or not there be any barrier put in our way by this expression, 'Come.' Is it a mysterious act of the mind ? Is it some very delicate feeling ? Is it a great experience, or a high attainment, that must precede the enjoyment of Christ as ours ? In reply to such questions, I remark that nothing but a self-righteous tendency in the heart would ever have led us to mistake a matter which in itself is very simple. We repeat it - it is the self-righteousness of the natural man that leads him to think that there is anything perplexing in words which Christ thought so simple that He never once has given an explanation of them. For it is a fact, that just as our Master knew there was no need of explaining to any one what He meant when He said 'Hearken !' so did He consider 'Come !' to be a term that needeth no explanation. Any one that has an ear knows the former : why should any one who has a I soul that can think and feel not know the latter? It is self-righteousness that entangles us here ; it is a want of sufficient appreciation of Christ. The hesitation arises from our sight of what Christ is being still very dim ; not attractive enough to fill our heart and conscience.

For, in truth, this 'Coming to Christ' is simply the soul's state when occupied with thoughts about Christ, so occupied therewith as to have left behind it all other things. The soul in such a state of engrossment, is said to have come to Him. It has no other whom it cares for, no other that fills up its desires, no other that meets its case ; and so it has left all others for this One, and in doing so is said to have 'come to him.' His person and work have met the cravings of both conscience and heart.

If you are at all troubled with this 'Come,' I do not hesitate to say that your eye is averted from its proper object. When Jesus says, 'Come unto me' (Matthew 11:28), He never meant you to stop short at the first word ; He meant you to put all the stress upon 'ME.' Indeed, He has used a form of expression that is purposely fitted to produce this result ; for He has used a word for 'Come' which [in the Greek original] is neither more nor less than 'This way,' or 'Hither' - not a verb, but an adverb. He cries, 'All ye that are heavy laden, leave off trying other means and try me! This way to me ! Hither to me !' It is thus that He speaks, putting the whole stress upon the 'me.' 'All ye that labour, says the gracious Master, 'look this way ! look hither ! to me - to me - to none other but to me!'

It is the same word used (John 21:12), 'Come and dine,' where surely He meant not to say more or less than, 'Leave off now your other engagements, and let us dine.' It is the woman's word at Sychar, 'Come, see a man that told me all' (John 4:29). It is the master's word in the parable (Matthew 22:4), 'Come to the marriage ;' that is, 'Let us go off to the marriage! All is ready; away to this feast!' It is the angel's word at the tomb (Matthew 28:6), 'Come, see the place where the Lord lay;' that is, 'Here is the spot, see for yourselves ; this way, down here ! So that the emphasis all lies in the object presented to us; never in the act of our minds. But we, self-righteous as we are, would fain delay and linger, excusing ourselves by saying, 'I do not know how to perform the act aright.' The real truth, however, is that we are not quite satisfied, or perhaps not very fully occupied, with the object. We would not thus tarry on our own feelings, and acts, and states of mind, were we very fully engrossed with the Christ who is set before us, and who stands in the abundance of His grace beckoning us to advance and enjoy infinite love. 'This way, O sinner! - this way! To me, and to no other!'

Yes, this is all. He beckons you to Himself! Why turn in your eye on yourself? why gaze on your wounds? why gaze on your temptations? why look at waves, and listen to winds? The Master cries, 'To me, to me!' He says, O soul, up! forsake your schemes, your thoughts, your ways, and away at once to me! 0 precious soul! do not be detained by inquiries into the acts of your mind, but at once think of me; me whom the Father sent to save sinners, even the chief ; me who came to seek and save the lost ; me, whom the Spirit delighteth to glorify ; me who have satisfied the law, who my own self bare your sins in my own body on the tree ; me who have done all that a sinner needs for righteousness ; me who am come to give you myself, with all I have doe and suffered, to be your ransom. Take me for your conscience; take me for your heart. The case might be stated thus. When I, a sinner, am brought to be willing that Christ should come to me and give me all I need, this is my soul's conuing to Christ. My coming to Christ is, in other words, my soul satisfied with His coming to me ! When my soul is letting alone and forsaking other things, because taken up with Christ's coming out of the Father's bosom to save sinners; this is my soul's coming to Christ! My conscience was asking, 'Wherewithal shall I come before God?' Shall it be by bringing rivers of oil ? Shall it be by offering my soul's sorrow and bitterest grief, as well as my body's

penance? I find that it is not thus; nor yet by my prayers, nor by the help of any priest, nor by the aid of any creature's merit, nor by any thing that is not to be found in Christ. What is in Christ is all that my soul needs. Perplexed soul, the Holy Spirit brings all such difficulties as yours to an end by fixing the attention and staying the mind upon this glorious truth, viz. :- That Christ, 'His own self' (1 Peter 2:24), is the only atonement for sin, the only propitiation. Do think of Christ, His person, His heart of love, His words of grace, and all this in connection with His finished work, His sacrifice accepted; and while thus engaged, 'ere ever you are aware, your soul shall be as the chariots of Amminadib.'

Most blessed word, 'Come!' but let it not be misunderstood. It is not itself the Leader, but only the waving of His banner, and the streaming of its folds to the four winds of heaven, as if saying, 'Gather to Shiloh, all ends of the earth.' Blessed word, 'Come!' only remember it is not the Person, but His kind voice drawing off my attention from other objects. It is not the sacrifice, but it is the silver trumpet summoning me to the sacrifice. Blessed word, 'Come,' for, instead of the tremendous 'Depart!' of the judgment-day, spoken to rejecting and rejected sinners, it sends forth the proclamation of the gate still open, the heart of God open, for me a sinner. But perhaps you object - Surely I have something to do, for does He not go on to say, 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and ye shall find rest to your souls'? (Matthew 11:29.) Yes, He does; hut He does not say that this taking on of His yoke is the same as coming to Him. Far otherwise ; it is what follows upon your coming to Him ; it is the service you engage in after having come to Him. You come to Him at once, and find rest at once; and on the spot He makes your soul as white as snow: and then, the next step is your drawing His plough, 'taking on His yoke.' In thus serving and 'learning of Him,' you get another rest - viz., rest from former corruptions, passions, unholy impulses, tormenting desires. This second rest is the rest of Sanctification, and is not to be confounded with the first rest, which is that of Justification. At once, then, fellow sinner, hasten to Him. All you need is here. Here is full salvation ; for He says, 'All things are delivered unto me of my Father.' Here is free salvation ; for the Father reveals it to whom He will, and nothing whatsoever in the sinner can be a barrier to Him. It is a salvation all plain ; for 'He reveals it unto babes.' It is a salvation all for sinners ; for the persons invited are 'heavy-laden ones,' persons who have a load of sin, whether they feel it little or much or not at all ; and 'labouring,' that is, trying in vain to save themselves, trying in vain to swim to shore.

Surely, then, I and Christ must meet. Why should we not? He beckons me off self and all else, and says, 'To me, to me alone!' This day, then, let it be so! Father, I see Thee pointing me away from ordinances, from the Bible, from my faith, as well as from my unbelief, to Christ alone, that I and He may meet ! the sinner with the Saviour ? no one between ! Jesus, Master, in Thee, in Thee is peace ! Holy Spirit, thou hast bathed my weary soul! And here I rest, until the day arrive when I shall hear Him say, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world.' I get rest the moment I come to Him. I get rest again when I become somewhat like Him, and the troubled sea of my passions sinks into a calm. I shall get a third rest when I die in the Lord (Revelation 14:13); and soon I shall enter on the final rest that remains for the people of God, when He to whom I now come shall come from heaven to glorify all who here came to Him (2 Thessalonians 1:7.)

S. EPAPHRAS

EPAPHRAS 'Always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God'

Colossians 4:12.

Epaphras was a citizen of Colosse. Hence his deep interest in the Colossians. The Lord does not ask His people to give up their patriotism when they turn to Him. Epaphras had a particular desire that the Colossians should be blessed, because he was one of them. From the words in Colossians 1:7 it would appear that Epaphras was their minister, one for whom Paul had great love. He calls him his 'dear fellow-servant.' From Philemon we find that he was a prisoner at this time along with Paul in Rome. Paul speaks of him as a 'servant of Christ.' If you know the meaning of the words you know what an honour they imply, and at the same time great responsibility.

Let us dwell on this remarkable feature of Epaphras' character, his prayerfulness. He was a prisoner in Rome. Many of God's saints have done their best work in prison. Epaphras wrote nothing; it is not said that he had any visions in that prison; but his work was prayer, 'labouring fervently.' And notice it is in the plural, 'in prayers,' and 'always.'

1. Epaphras' labours in prayer. - Being a servant of Christ, he was one who was very much with Christ.

He went to Him to get commissions, and then returned to tell Him how he had executed them. He was not like Paul who wrote letters never-to-be-forgotten, but he had another talent, that of prayer, and he turned it to good account. He was just as useful, perhaps, in his own place as Paul. He 'laboured fervently' in prayers. The words are like those used about Christ in Gethsemane : 'being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly.'

He agonised in prayer. His were Gethsemane prayers. He made his prison-cell fragrant with the sweet incense of prayer. Is he not a man to be envied? He is certainly a man to be imitated. He did this 'always.' Every day he was to be found praying for his beloved people at Colosse. He had great faith in prayer. He knew the fulness of Christ's heart as well as the abundance of the treasure laid up in Him, so he was not afraid to ask much. He knew there was great danger of his people standing still, and not growing in grace.

Real prayer, earnest prayer, is hard work.

There are so many interruptions ; so many excuses for not persevering suggest themselves to the mind. A believing man is more ready at work than at prayer. Satan has a special ill-will at praying people. Some one has said that Satan's orders are, 'fight not with small or great, but only with the praying people.' If we are to persevere in prayer, it must be prayer in the Spirit, with the atmosphere of the Spirit all around us. Epaphras would never say his prison was a tiresome place. He would say he had plenty of work to do there. Be like him, labouring for God in prayer. If you can't work, if you can't speak, you can pray. But work hard at it like Epaphras, and you will be an

immense benefactor to others.

'Of all thy gifts we ask but one, Give us the constant power to pray.

Indulge us, Lord, in this request, Thou canst not then deny the rest.'

Lengthen your brief prayers. Take more time, and in this way bring down showers upon your own soul, and upon all around you.

2. The main theme of Epaphras' request. - We would have thought it would be for a revival, for the conversion of many souls at Colosse. No, it was for believers he prayed with most intense earnestness, and always, day after day. This was an indirect way of reaching the unsaved, for if believers get more of God's grace, they will go forth to others. It is more difficult to find Epaphrases than to find workers. The coldness and inconsistencies of believers are an immense hindrance to the conversion of souls. On the other hand, if believers are full of the Spirit, full of love to souls, the world sees they have got something that earth cannot give, and when they show by their joy in Christ that they are satisfied, the world would like to get at their secret. There are far more people made to think by seeing the joy of believers, and their satisfaction in Christ, than by any word they speak. Epaphras would ask all this for the Colossians, 'that they might be perfect and complete in all the will of God,' - in all that God wanted them to do, that the seal of the Spirit might be very distinct and legible in them. There was once a great deal of murmuring among the Gentile converts in Jerusalem. God showed them how to remedy the evil, and the murmuring was stopped (Acts 6:1-7); and we read that 'the Word of God increased, the number of the disciples multiplied, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.' That was one result of doing the will of God. After Paul's conversion there was a lull in persecution, and 'walking in the fear of God, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, the churches were multiplied.' Besides this result to the unsaved, it is so glorifying to God when believers are lively and vigorous.

Seek to labour fervently in this work of prayer. I have met with many who have come to tell me they were going to give up part of their work because they had not time for it, but I never remember in the course of my ministry meeting with any one who wanted to give up some part of his work because he was going to take the time for prayer. If any one did do this, the part of work he had left would soon be filled up.

If you are not 'always labouring fervently in prayers' you will be dwarfed Christians. Would you not, for your own sake, be 'perfect and complete in all the will of God'?

Chapter 108

S. First-fruits of the Resurrection

First-fruits of the Resurrection.

'The graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose.'

Matthew 27:50-53 This is a passage about which very little has been written. Commentators seem to pass it by as something very mysterious. But if the Holy Spirit be with us we will find that there is a lesson for us in this part of the Word. 'The rocks rent.' Wherever we read of this taking place we know it is the presence of the Lord. This explains Jonathan's wonderful victory ■ 'there was trembling . . . and the earth quaked' (1 Samuel 14:15). At Philippi the earth shook (Acts 16:26) ■the Lord was present. 'The saints which slept arose.' When death is spoken of as sleep, it is generally in reference to God's people. Daniel speaks of those that 'sleep in the dust' (Daniel 12:2). Then we have it in John 11:11; 1 Corinthians 15:6, 1 Corinthians 15:51; Acts 7:60. It is as if the Lord did not wish us to think of death as anything sad or disagreeable. He wants us to think of it as a sleep or rest,■a blessed sleep without even dreams. Let us learn from this the connection between the graves opening and the Veil rending. The Veil separated between the Holy and Most Holy Places. It was a doorway or gateway representing Christ. 'I am the Door.' And when the Lord put down His hand and rent it from top to bottom, He opened the way for us to go in. He can come out, and we can go in. In this connection we shall see some special meaning in the graves opening. It was the death of Christ that opened them. Your body is redeemed by Christ's death as well as your soul, and it must come out of the grave.

'After His resurrection.' The graves were opened at His death, but the saints did not come out of their graves till Christ's resurrection. It is like when Christ breathed on the disciples and said, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost,' but they did not actually receive the Spirit until Pentecost. 'Many bodies,' ■not merely one or two. I think it means a great company. What is the meaning of this? The graves stood open till the third day, and passers-by would be amazed to see the stones rolled away. You begin to see now this was a testimony to Christ in more ways than one. These are all saints, and they are coming out of their graves to honour the Holy One. Perhaps the reason Christ did this was to show a sample of His power. These saints were the first-fruits of the resurrection, and when He went up they would be His body-guard, nearer Him than the angels.

If you ask, why does only Matthew mention this? The answer is, the Holy Ghost gave one part to one and another to another. To Luke He gave the part of the record that showed He was the Saviour of the Gentiles; to Mark, that which showed by little things that He was the Messiah; to John, that which showed His divinity. Matthew shows prophecy fulfilled in Christ. Daniel 12:2 says, 'many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.' Matthew says, 'many of the saints which slept arose.' Christ did what Daniel says will be done for all the saints. He took some of them and raised them up. In effect He was saying, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.'

These saints were likely those who had lately died, for they 'went into the holy city and appeared to many.' If they had been saints of an older time they would not have been known. Perhaps old

Simeon was one of them, and Anna and Zacharias. When Christ appeared after His resurrection He conversed as well as appeared. These saints appeared and conversed with many. At first they would cause alarm, but that would soon be dissipated. It is not likely they spoke of the other world. Very likely they appeared as witnesses for Christ. From all this let us learn the connection between Christ's resurrection and ours. Christ's love to His own is so great that He will not lose even the dust of His people. He will fashion it all into beauty and comeliness. Where there was weakness He will put power, and where there was corruption He will put incorruption.

S. God's "Fear Nots."

God’s "Fear Nots."

Andrew Bonar

[God’s promises are all "Yea and Amen" in Christ Jesus. But let us see that we take them all from the hand of Jesus. Let the Owner of the Vineyard give us the grapes; let us not pick them as they hang over the wall. Is Christ yours? Then His promises are yours.] 1. "Fear not, Abraham; I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." - Genesis 15:1. The first time in the Bible "FEAR NOT" occurs. It is spoken to a sinner who simply believed God when He told him of the Promised Seed. It is for thee, also, who believest in that Promised One.

2. "Fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is." - Genesis 21:17. The second time in the Bible "FEAR NOT" occurs. It is kindly spoken to one who had had shortly before a visit of the Angel of the Covenant (Genesis 16:10). Has He taken away thy great burden of sin? Then, "What aileth thee, Hagar? FEAR NOT" - He will order this providence for good.

3. "Fear not; for I am with thee, and will bless thee." - Genesis 26:24.

Spoken to Isaac, who had Abraham’s God as his God. Hast thou annoyance from envious neighbours? If the God of Isaac is thine, this "FEAR NOT" is for thee. Thou shalt prosper.

4. "Fear not; your God and the God of your father hath given you treasure." - Genesis 43:23.

God removes our suspicious alarms, as Joseph did those of his brethren, here and in Genesis 50:19, by showing us that He has got full payment, and has thoughts of love towards us. Just as Boaz (Ruth 3:11) removed fear from Ruth, by telling what was in his heart ; and as David (1 Samuel 22:23) dispelled Abiathar’s by declaring that now he had on his side one who would die sooner than see him injured.

5. "Fear not to go down into Egypt." - Genesis 46:3.

Spoken to Jacob, about to proceed on a journey, in his old age, under circumstances of anxiety. "I am God ; FEAR NOT !" This is enough for thee, who knowest by experience that thy God has saved thy soul.

6. "Fear ye not ; stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." - Exodus 14:13 To Israel at the Red Sea. Has God made the path of duty plain to thee? Then, hesitate not to trust Him to carry thee through it. Thy way will open out as thou advancest. How different the event when man, and not God, speaks ! Those that stood by Rachel, Genesis 35:17, like those who stood by Phinehas’ daughter, 1 Samuel 4:20, said "FEAR NOT ;" yet death did come. And Jael met Sisera (Judges 4:18) with the same words ; but the end was death.

7. "Fear not ; for God is come to prove you that His fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not." - Exodus 20:20. At Sinai, when the people so felt the law and majesty of God as to cry out for a

Mediator. Art thou feeling the same? Let it drive thee to the Mediator, Jesus, in whom thy sin is hidden, and from whom the Spirit of Holiness comes.

60. "Fear not : I am the First and the Last : I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold ! I am alive for evermore, Amen ; and have the keys of hell and of death." - Revelation 1:17. Do you ever think you must tremble as you enter within the vail? or when the Lord comes again in His glory? Fear not ! He will gently lay His hand on thee, put strength in thee, and show thee Himself - yes, Himself who died, and who liveth evermore for us ! Himself, who has thy name on His heart !

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Chapter 110

S. History of a Model of the Tabernacle, 1879

History of a Model of the Tabernacle, 1879

Andrew Bonar

[The notes which form this chapter are taken, with additions and explanations, from a little book in which Dr. Bonar had jotted down a brief account of the origin of his model of the Tabernacle. It was one of the methods of preaching the Gospel which he made use of during the course of his ministry - a method which he loved, and which, as these notes tell, was greatly blessed in many places throughout Scotland.] The value of a 'thought' may be very great. Everybody knows this. It may be the seed of a great harvest. But it is not the thought merely in itself, but the thought carried out and used.

It is like what in the mechanical department has been found to be the value of a small piece of metal, if turned to use by a little skill and application. A late writer shows that 'a farthing's worth of iron may be converted into an ounce of steel, by labour worth 4,5d. That, again, might be converted by labour into 2250 yards of spring wire, worth £13,4s.od. By putting it through yet another process, that wire might be made into 7650 spring balances, worth 2/6d each, which, in the aggregate, could give £960 odds.'

Starting with this illustration from mechanics, let me now show how in practical spiritual work a simple thought became the means of a great amount of blessing to souls. It is now thirty-three years at least since I first used this model.

About the year 1845, while in Collace, having read all I could find on the Tabernacle, and examined all the pictures and drawings that generally illustrate such books, I went one day to the workshop of a plain good man (an Old Light elder in the village of Sachar) and told him my idea of the possibility of making out of common wood a model of the Tabernacle. He was a turner and joiner. The good man was interested, and, at my suggestion, a board about 3 feet long and 1,5 broad was got ready - the oblong shape of the Tabernacle. Then he prepared sixty wooden pillars, and set them in their place to form the enclosure. Next, boring the pillars at the top, a cord was drawn through, and a rude contrivance was thus formed for suspending linen curtains. The first altar was boards of wood shaped into a square, and the boards covered with brass-filings. So also the laver. And then the forty boards of the Holy and Most Holy Place were got ready and covered with gold-leaf. At this juncture, a kind friend in Perth, hearing of my attempt, sent me a large ram's skin dyed red, to form one of the four coverings. Next, a 'wise-hearted' lady gave me a shawl of the Angola goat's hair to form the goat's-hair covering. The other two I supplied after a time with linen, on which were stripes of purple, blue, and scarlet, and a piece of badger-skin formed the outer covering.

It was not, however, till I had been in London, and had there seen a much more substantial model, that I found means of providing the furniture of the Sanctuary : Candlestick, Shew-bread, Incense-altar, and the Ark of the Covenant. In about a year thereafter my wooden pillars were

exchanged for metal, etc. In short, I got in London a model so far ready-made, but I was led to alter some of the articles. That model cost above £3, nothing very attractive or beautiful in the appearance.

I remember the first evening when I exhibited the model in our church in Kinrossie to about one hundred people. The sun was near his setting, and his light was pouring in at one window. I lifted up the red ram's-skin covering, and asked, 'What does this remind you of?' A solemn silence first, and then a whisper : 'Blood, blood !'

Gradually, I got familiar with the whole subject, and in my own mind had special doctrines connected with all the different parts, e.g. the Door, with its royal colours, blue, purple, scarlet, was the Gospel call by divine authority (our God and King), 'Come freely' - no bar, no bolt. The Altar, justification ; the Laver, sanctification ; the Fine Linen, righteousness.

I soon discovered that I could vary the lecture, and sometimes abridge - sometimes enlarge - according to the audience. Young and old alike, I discovered, were drawn by it. On bidding a young person tell her mother to come, the little girl replied, 'May I come myself?' 'How often have you seen it already?' 'Only five times!'

I discovered that I myself never felt it stale. There was endless variety in that setting forth of Salvation, alike, too, in occasional drawing-room gatherings or in cottages. When I came to Glasgow I got the case made for carrying the Courts, and the box for the Holy and Most Holy Places.

I had visits from some well-known people who wanted to see the model, among others, Mr. Soltau, who wrote a book on the Tabernacle. Canon Savage came on purpose to spend an hour going over the model.

It has been shown in about one hundred places, and about two hundred times. My cousin, an Irvingite, insisted that silver was the type of love. 'How do you find that?' 'It was so common in Solomon's days, nothing accounted of!'

Many confused Solomon's Temple with the Tabernacle. They are quite distinct. The Tabernacle showed God's way of grace ; the Temple showed the kingdom of glory.

Many good hints I have got from others. J.M. said about brass : 'Brass will crack and not stand great heat.' 'But the Hebrew is properly copper.' 'Ah, that will do ; that stands any heat.' Another said : 'Copper, not brass, is the right word for the material for the altar.' 'Why?' 'Brass is a mixed metal, and there was to be no mixture in the things of God ; no linen and woollen.' A minister of the Free Church, now gone, was first awakened to interest in spiritual things by seeing the model exhibited in Cathcart Free Church.

About the year 1862 I had shown the model in the hall of Free St.Enoch's. At the close, Mr. Nichol, colleague to Dr. Henderson, rose and said he would like to tell a story connected with the model. When he was a student at home in Dundee, he heard I was to show it one day (a holiday of some kind) in the schoolhouse of Tealing, where Mr. Mellis was minister. Among those who flocked in was a boy - a schoolboy. he had recently played the truant for a week. He had got a shilling from his father to buy a new book, had spent it, and kept away from school, but came home every day at the regular time, pretending all was right. He was miserable under this system of deceit. In this

state he came into the schoolroom, and when hearing of the Altar and its blood, and the Laver purifying, saw how he could be forgiven, found rest, went home, and confessed all. At Bishopbriggs an elder said, 'It was the Blood that was the best of it.' A little girl, telling all about the model, dwelt on the Blood, - 'And the Blood was shown every day, every day !' In Moray Free Church, Edinburgh, a young man reminded me that I had shown the model in a meeting in Carrick Street, and said, 'That was the night J.F. was brought in.'

Dr. Robert Burns of Toronto saw it in 1850, and said at the close, 'It is true, "faith cometh by hearing," but, friends, may we not say also to-night, faith cometh by seeing, for we have seen the Gospel ?'

Dr. Bannerman remarked, 'I noticed you sometimes said, "This suggests such a truth." That's the right way to put it, for, while we have authority for some things as meant to be types, there are others we cannot say more than that "they suggest this."'

Mr. Pinkerton of Kilwinning remarked, after seeing the model, 'I never heard a better sermon.' A lady met me, and said, 'Thanks for the sermon last Tuesday, the sermon you did not preach.' 'What was it?' 'I came into the church, and the sight of the furniture of the Tabernacle was a great sermon to me - the best sermon I ever heard - a flood of light.'

Mr. John Smith, our missionary, was conscious to himself of a new hold of truth from the day he saw the model, and always took delight afterwards in seeing it again and again.

M. W. got more sure rest to his soul the night he first saw the Tabernacle. The wife of a minister in the country, and her niece, had been awakened, and came to call. She sat for an hour asking questions about the truth suggested by the model which providentially was on my study-table. I had been showing it to a student. The account of the High Priest's dress on the Day of Atonement, - all white linen, - while he carried in the charger of blood, was blessed to a young woman, who never till then entertained the thought of every day looking at the blood again, and going to God.

Mr. L., at Alloa, asked me what I thought about this : 'If the Most Holy Place was shut all the year till the Day of Atonement, the dust would be thick, and the air anything but fresh. Would the Glory hinder the dust falling? and would it not give a constant freshness to the room?' A minister's wife said it was on occasion of a lecture at Dundee on the Tabernacle, that she first felt the holiness of God, and a strong wish to speak to some one about her soul.

Mrs. S. (Balbeggie, near Collace) never so felt the holiness of God's presence as in looking in when the light was put into the Holy of Holies, and we were asked to think of going alone into God's presence there. The Gate - no bar, and so easily opened. Many spoke of that. Young people saw at once how young Samuel could 'open the gate of the house of the Lord.' In the Court the pillars had a 'fillet' each, as well as a 'hook', made of Ransom-money. Dr. Lorimer stopped me when showing it at the Shelter in Glasgow, and asked the girls to notice, 'Even the ornaments of God's people must be in connection with ransom,' - not to please ourselves. The Altar with its daily lamb. One came to me and said, 'I've been thinking if it took fifteen hundred years to set out a picture of the Lamb of God, O what is He Himself !' The Altar was carried by the staves. God taught the priests to be very reverent. The four horns are the emblem of power. The blood on the horns was to show the power there was in the blood. A worthy elder in Perth used to speak of his conversion as 'the day when I first knew the power of the blood.' The Laver, filled with pure water

to the brim. Water represents the Spirit. The Spirit will stay wherever the blood is. First the Altar, then the Laver. The Altar says, 'the blood of Jesus delivers from the guilt of sin.' The Laver says, 'the Spirit of Jesus delivers from the power of sin.' A friend asked, 'Where did they get the water for the Laver the first time? From the stream that flowed from the Smitten Rock !' The Holy spirit from a Smitten Christ ! The Badger-skin and the Goat-hair coverings. In the R.V. 'badger-skin' is 'seal-skin,' and in the margin, 'porpoise-skin.' One said about these, 'I used to be content with the Badger-skin (mere shelter), but now I'm under the Goat's-hair - delighting in the beauty put upon the justified by the righteousness of Christ imputed.' Mr. T.B., from Holland, was particularly interested in the four coverings. 'That's my spiritual history. I first learned Christ as a covert from the storm, then His blood as a Substitute - the Ram-skin ; then His righteousness on me - the Goat's-hair ; and then the royal dress - blue, purple, and scarlet ; our being made kings to God.' The Candlestick with its shaft of gold and branches : Christ and His people. The branches of equal length, proved by the Arch of Titus. God's people all alike before Him. The Shew-bread. Few know why it is called 'shew-bread.' It is 'presence-bread,' - bread handed out to us from God's own table. Curious to find most vague ideas, and those who have them very unwilling to let them be known. Thus about the Shew-bread, just as about the size and shape of the Ark. A Jew pointed out to me that I should have had the staves of the Ark in another position, protruding through the curtain a little, to show that the Ark was always there. We spoke of the twelve loaves, should they be piled one on the other, or laid along like tents pitched? He held the former way. 'But the Hebrews do not require that.' 'No.' 'Why then?' 'Our Rabbis say so.' 'But there is an objection to that, very strong. I was showing this model in a cottage, and put the question to a row of shrewd old women, whether the loaves should be piled up, or put the other way? At once one of them said, 'Not piled one on another.' 'Why?' 'They would mould before the end of the week.' 'What do you say to the old woman's difficulty?' 'Oh,' replied the Jew, 'she is a wise woman. She is so far right, but our Rabbis get over that by telling us that silver forks were put between each loaf, so that there was a current of air !' 'Then you are as bad as the Papists, you add to the written Word?' He had no reply but 'Our Rabbis think they have authority for it.' The Incense-Altar. A type, not of prayer, but of what makes prayer acceptable (Revelation 8:1-13). Christ is the Angel-messenger. His fragrant incense, the merit of His blood, on the four horns. Put on this altar your praises, your prayers, all your cups of cold water. The Veil, a door, a curtain-door. God's way out to us, and our way in to God. Christ, the Door, after being rent. When He died, the Veil was rent 'from top to bottom,' - God's work, not man's. The Cherubim, a whole history in itself. The word, 'carved form'=symbolic form. A type of the redeemed. (1) They stand on the Ark, and their feet on the blood. They cannot be angels. No angel needs the blood. (2) They are united to the Mercy-seat. No angel is so. Their eye is partly on the blood, and partly on each other. The copy of the Two Tables in the Ark. The Cherubim stand on righteousness, for the blood vindicates the broken law. The Two Tables=Christ's obedience. The Cherubim at the gate of Eden say, 'You, Adam and Eve, may get in again.' Grace at the very moment of their expulsion. The Shittim-wood boards fixed in the ransom-money by two tenons. A firm hold (q.d.), both hands. The Corner-boards, like the Corner-stone, on which one may stumble, but meant for far other ends. Perhaps not overlapping, but one of them projecting. The Rings ; (Exodus 26:24) a difficulty. 'They shall be doubled beneath (coupled together), and doubled at the head of it (coupled together above) into the one ring. It shall be alike for both of them. They shall be thus for the two corners ;' or rather, I think, 'they shall be twins below. Its top shall be twins fitting in to the one ring,' 'Its top' is the board in two leaves. The

forty-eight Boards. If forty-nine, that would have been seven times seven, a complete number. But the Church is not complete without its Head ; He makes it forty-nine, seven times seven. The Pillar-Cloud over all, day and night. At any hour might the Priest or Levite have light enough to go to any part of the courts, and the Pillar-Cloud would seem to point down to yon Altar!

Such are some of the results of a 'thought', but it was carried out, not left unused. Besides, to take one subject like this and master all the details is (1) Good discipline to the mind. (2) It gives one's-self confidence in teaching and applying. (3) It makes others trust you and receive your teaching more readily. And once more, - if the 'thought' has been for the glory of God, and not merely a pleasant exercise of mind, then it comes under the blessing : 'Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart' (2 Chronicles 6:8).

Model of Tabernacle

Click on image for larger photo with explanation.

* * * * * * * THE WALK WITH GOD AS SHOWN IN THE TABERNACLE OF WITNESS 'Christ, the True Tabernacle' (Hebrews 8:2) (Suggested as a Programme for the Perth Conference)

I. THE COURTS (1) Christ, the Door of access to all we need in going to God.

Christ, the Door (Veil) into the Holy Place. xxxxxxxxxxxx Christ, the Door (Veil) into the Holiest of all. xxxxxxxxxxx (2) The Altar. - The forgiveness we need found here.xxxxxxxxxx In Atonement (Leviticus 17:1-16) and xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx Reconciliation (Ephesians 2:1-22).xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx Proclaimed (Acts 13:1-52) and xxxxxxxxxxxxx Experienced (1 John 2:1-29). xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx (3) The Laver. - The purifying of the heart (Acts 15:9). xxxxxxx Daily washing (John 13:1-38). xxxxxxxxxxxxxx By the Spirit and the Word (Ephesians 5:26). x 'Clean Hands.' 'Holy Hands.' xxxxxxxxxx II. THE HOLY PLACE (1) The Shew-bread. - Life in Christ (John 6:35). Bread of God. The Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:24). xxxxxxxxx Partakers of the Lord's Supper (John 6:1-71). xxx (2) The Candlestick. - Light in Christ. xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx Christ and we spoken of as 'light' xxxxxxxxxx (John 8:12 ;Matthew 5:14).

Given in the Gospel (2 Corinthians 4:4 - 2 Corinthians 4:6). xxxxxxxx Our walk in it (1 John 1:7). xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx (3) The Golden Altar. - Worship in Christ. xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx Christ the Intercessor (Hebrews 7:1-28). xxxxxxxxxxx Prayer sent through Him (Revelation 8:1-13). xxxxxxxxx Praise and thanks through Him (Hebrews 13:15).

III. THE HOLY OF HOLIES Holiness and Glory within the Veil (1) The Ark. - Christ in His Person (Colossians 2:3). xxxxxxxxxxxxxx In His doing the Father's will. 'The Law within His heart.' The Two Tables (Psalms 40:1-17). In His propitiatory suffering unto death. xxxxx The blood sprinkled there (Romans 3:25). xxxxx (2) The Cherubim on the Ark, and united to it. xxxxxxxxxx Union to Christ as well as rest in His Person, x obedience, and blood.

(3) The Cherubim with their faces toward each other. xxx Brotherly love and fellowship (1 John 1:7). xx (4) The Cloud of Glory between the Cherubim. xxxxxxxxx God in full communion with His redeemed xx and they with Him, and God dwelling with xx them (Revelation 21:3). xxxxxxxxxxxx (5) Paradise thus more than restored ; the flaming sword x sheathed ; the Cherubim in Eden ; the Tree of Life reached. xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx (6) Pot of Manna and Aaron's Rod.

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx Reminiscences of ancient days - of God’s xx ways with us in the past - xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx ’Days of Earth in Heaven !’

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S. How Faith Receives Christ and Rests on Him

How Faith Receives Christ and Rests on Him An Illustration.

Andrew Bonar NOTES OF AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE PERTH CONFERENCE, 1885

It is often best for us not to attempt to define Faith and its actings, but to show how the soul that has been awakened and is seeking a resting-place, may be gently led by the Spirit to meet Christ, in whom it finds all it desires, without an effort. Let us try this plan of illustrating the actings of Faith.

We go back to the early days of the Church, and we seek out Ephesus, where the Apostle John is understood to have passed his latest years. We find out his dwelling; and the aged disciple readily converses with us on our common faith. And ofttimes (as old men are wont) he goes back to the days of his youth. He is now in his ninetieth year; but how fresh and vivid are the early scenes of his life that rise up before him! We ask him to tell us how he was led to "receive and rest" in Christ, and here is his narrative:

"I was the youngest of the twelve, you know, only in my twenty-fourth year, when first I saw Him. I had been for some time uneasy, for I knew I was a sinner, and an unpardoned sinner. My two friends, Andrew and Peter, were very much in the same state of mind as myself; and when the rumours about the preaching of the Baptist, and how he was continually pointing forward to a Saviour about to be revealed, reached us, we talked together earnestly on the matter, and at length resolved to go to the banks of Jordan and hear him for ourselves. So, leaving our boats and nets in the care of my father, Zebedee, and my brother James, and promising to bring back a faithful report, we found our way to the spot where the great preacher was standing amid a vast crowd of solemnized hearers from all parts of the land. He was (you know) the last of the good old Nazirites, and the blessing that belonged to the true Nazirite's bodily frame rested on him. He was 'purer than snow, whiter than milk, more ruddy in body than rubies, and his 'veining was like the sapphire.' A youth of thirty, thus wonderfully attractive, his voice rang out in clear tones his message, as he declared himself no more than the herald of the Coming Messiah, a voice crying, 'Prepare the way of the Lord.' But, Oh, how he delighted to witness to that Saviour as the 'Light for a dark world! 'the only begotten of the Father,' who was to declare Him, coming forth from the Father's bosom."

"'Mightier than I!' he would say. 'He has the fan in His hand wherewith to winnow the barn-floor, and sweep away the chaff into the fire, which once kindled, shall not be quenched for ever. He has the axe, and He shall cut down every fruitless tree, and make it fuel for that fire. But far more. I baptize with water only, a mere symbol of cleansing from guilt, but He shall truly cleanse, and shall baptize with the Holy Ghost, as if the Holy Ghost were at His disposal, even as are the Jordan's waters at mine when I pour them on the sinner that confesses his iniquities. Oh, I am not worthy to unloose the latchet of his shoes! "

"Now, Peter, Andrew, and myself, were among those who went forward to be baptized by him, and as he baptized us he was careful to remind us, 'My baptism does not wash away your sins, but it

sends you to the Mightier than I who is at hand!

Often after this, did we three commune together about that Mighty One. Sometimes, by ourselves on the bank of the river, shaded by its jungle trees, we read the Fifty-first Psalm, and longed for the true hyssop that was to purge us, and make us whiter than snow. One day, after the visits of the priests and Levites from Jerusalem, we saw One going forward towards John with indescribable meekness and lowliness, and calm dignity. The great preacher stood silent for a moment, and then, lifting up his voice, exclaimed, with rapturous delight: 'BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD, WHICH TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD.' Every one was awed; Andrew, and Peter, and I, were filled with strange expectation. Is this He who was set forth by every lamb offered in sacrifice to God for hundreds and hundreds of years? Is this the great Paschal Lamb? Is this He of whom Isaiah spoke, 'The lamb led to the slaughter? Is this in very deed the real atoning sacrifice, God's Lamb? "How we talked over that afternoon's announcement! And when next day, Andrew and I were just in the act of putting some questions to John, Jesus came close by, and John at once fixed our whole thoughts on Him, saying, 'BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD!' I found myself, at that moment, thinking of nothing but this 'Lamb of God.' I found myself without an effort laying my guilt on Him. Yes, I laid on Him my soul, my guilty soul; just as I had often seen the offerer at Jerusalem lay his hand on the sacrifice. This Lamb of God filled my whole being! What more could I desire for my complete deliverance from guilt than this mighty Saviour thus placing Himself before me for my acceptance. "Andrew was drawn to Him just as I was, and when He had gone from us a little way, the desire of both of us was to follow Him to where He lodged. We did so, and He welcomed us most graciously. What an evening we spent under His roof! We had no thought but of Him; and I, at any rate, had not leisure to think even of my own unworthiness, for He bade me lean on His breast, and all my moments were passed in wonder and adoration. "Ever since that blessed time I have gone on my way, living the life of faith on the Son of God. It is almost seventy years since then (for I am now in my ninetieth year); but whether in Galilee, or in Jerusalem, whether in exile, or in quiet at Ephesus, 'the Lamb of God' has been everything to me. Too often have I forsaken Him for a time, or faintly followed Him; but it is ever to Him, and Him alone, I return again for rest and joy. I have never needed anything new, anything more satisfying to my conscience and heart than 'the Lamb of God,' and I expect to 'hold the beginning of my confidence to the end.' I like to tell you these things, that you may have the same joy and the same fellowship. "A few years ago, when I was an exile in Patmos, I had a season of most wonderful visions. The door of Heaven was opened to me, and nothing so rejoiced me as to see on the throne 'the Lamb! and to hear the ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands all singing with loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!' Again and again I saw Him, and I knew He was the same as I had first seen on the banks of Jordan, exalted now in view of all the universe, as the great Atoning Sacrifice accepted of the Father. And when I followed the angel that showed me these things, along the golden streets of the New Jerusalem, I saw that it was He, 'the Lamb of God,' who, by His presence, made it one great temple, and was Himself the Light that made that city and temple the most glorious region of the heaven of heavens. It was ever on Him, as 'the Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world,' that my eye rested. I shall need Him to the end: for I should not forget to tell you that I found indwelling sin still in my heart. Even after all I had been privileged to behold, the root of folly and sin still lived in me. For, looking on the angel who had most kindly led me through these scenes, I took my eye off my Lord and Saviour and fell down to worship the bright ministering spirit. Nay, more, though gently rebuked and warned, my weak

heart a second time turned aside to repeat the same folly. So I need to the very last, to lay my soul with all its sins on ’the Lamb from day to day, and in seeing Him I am filled with all joy and peace."

Christian friends, this is an example of simple faith, faith occupied altogether with the Lord Jesus, casting behind it self with all its feelings, musing upon, and asking questions about nothing except the Person and the work of Christ. A full sight of the Lamb fills the sails of faith. In truth it is even as in Luke 24:32, our hearts burn within us, while He talks with us by the way, and opens to us the Scriptures. And if, Christian friends, you should now inquire, "What is great faith, and what is little faith?" the answer is at hand. The sinner who sees little in Christ is the man to whom we must say "0, thou of little faith" ; whereas the sinner who, in full consciousness of utter worthlessness, sees something at least of the greatness and the grace and the glory of the Saviour’s Person and work, and can scarcely turn away from the sight, this is the man who has great faith. For this man sees great, very great, reasons for cherishing the largest expectations. The Centurion, at whose faith Jesus marvelled, was simply a man who had got deep insight into Christ as One so mighty to deliver, that a single word from Him was enough. "He spake, and it was done" (Psalms 33:9). 0 that all of us may so discover the Saviour’s unsearchable love, and the infinite power of His atoning blood! This faith unites us to Him whom we believe. An old hymn sings of it in these lines, describing its uniting effect as a "believing INTO Christ":

"And he that into Christ believes, What a rich faith hath he! In Christ he moves, and acts, and lives, From self and bondage free.

He hath the Father and the Son, For Christ and he are now but one." But how, then, is faith spoken of in 1 Peter 1:21, as our having "faith in God"? Because faith in Christ admits us at once into the Father’s presence; nay, more, the believing man finds himself in the bosom of God, in union with Christ. But why does Romans 3:25, speak of it as ’faith in His blood’? The answer is, "A part is taken for the whole; it is faith in Him who shed that blood." And so also it is "faith in the righteousness of Him who is our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:1). And why does the Master contrast "fear" with this "faith"? (Mark 4:40). Because in the hour of fear we are looking on the stormy waves and listening to the wild winds; but when we look on the Saviour and listen to His voice, the faith banishes the fear. But who can sufficiently commend this grace of faith? We must not make the attempt. Only let us remind you that (2 Peter 1:5-7) faith is the root of every other grace; and it is by faith that the mighty power of God works in keeping you unto the salvation that is "ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:5).

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Often after this, did we three commune together about that Mighty One. Sometimes, by ourselves on the bank of the river, shaded by its jungle trees, we read the Fifty-first Psalm, and longed for the true hyssop that was to purge us, and make us whiter than snow. One day, after the visits of the priests and Levites from Jerusalem, we saw One going forward towards John with indescribable meekness and lowliness, and calm dignity. The great preacher stood silent for a moment, and then, lifting up his voice, exclaimed, with rapturous delight: 'BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD, WHICH TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD.' Every one was awed; Andrew, and Peter, and I, were filled with strange expectation. Is this He who was set forth by every lamb offered in sacrifice to God for hundreds and hundreds of years? Is this the great Paschal Lamb? Is this He of whom Isaiah spoke, 'The lamb led to the slaughter? Is this in very deed the real atoning sacrifice, God's Lamb? "How we talked over that afternoon's announcement! And when next day, Andrew and I were just in the act of putting some questions to John, Jesus came close by, and John at once fixed our whole thoughts on Him, saying, 'BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD!' I found myself, at that moment, thinking of nothing but this 'Lamb of God.' I found myself without an effort laying my guilt on Him. Yes, I laid on Him my soul, my guilty soul; just as I had often seen the offerer at Jerusalem lay his hand on the sacrifice. This Lamb of God filled my whole being! What more could I desire for my complete deliverance from guilt than this mighty Saviour thus placing Himself before me for my acceptance. "Andrew was drawn to Him just as I was, and when He had gone from us a little way, the desire of both of us was to follow Him to where He lodged. We did so, and He welcomed us most graciously. What an evening we spent under His roof! We had no thought but of Him; and I, at any rate, had not leisure to think even of my own unworthiness, for He bade me lean on His breast, and all my moments were passed in wonder and adoration. "Ever since that blessed time I have gone on my way, living the life of faith on the Son of God. It is almost seventy years since then (for I am now in my ninetieth year); but whether in Galilee, or in Jerusalem, whether in exile, or in quiet at Ephesus, 'the Lamb of God' has been everything to me. Too often have I forsaken Him for a time, or faintly followed Him; but it is ever to Him, and Him alone, I return again for rest and joy. I have never needed anything new, anything more satisfying to my conscience and heart than 'the Lamb of God,' and I expect to 'hold the beginning of my confidence to the end.' I like to tell you these things, that you may have the same joy and the same fellowship. "A few years ago, when I was an exile in Patmos, I had a season of most wonderful visions. The door of Heaven was opened to me, and nothing so rejoiced me as to see on the throne 'the Lamb! and to hear the ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands all singing with loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!' Again and again I saw Him, and I knew He was the same as I had first seen on the banks of Jordan, exalted now in view of all the universe, as the great Atoning Sacrifice accepted of the Father. And when I followed the angel that showed me these things, along the golden streets of the New Jerusalem, I saw that it was He, 'the Lamb of God,' who, by His presence, made it one great temple, and was Himself the Light that made that city and temple the most glorious region of the heaven of heavens. It was ever on Him, as 'the Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world,' that my eye rested. I shall need Him to the end: for I should not forget to tell you that I found indwelling sin still in my heart. Even after all I had been privileged to behold, the root of folly and sin still lived in me. For, looking on the angel who had most kindly led me through these scenes, I took my eye off my Lord and Saviour and fell down to worship the bright ministering spirit. Nay, more, though gently rebuked and warned, my weak

heart a second time turned aside to repeat the same folly. So I need to the very last, to lay my soul with all its sins on ’the Lamb from day to day, and in seeing Him I am filled with all joy and peace."

Christian friends, this is an example of simple faith, faith occupied altogether with the Lord Jesus, casting behind it self with all its feelings, musing upon, and asking questions about nothing except the Person and the work of Christ. A full sight of the Lamb fills the sails of faith. In truth it is even as in Luke 24:32, our hearts burn within us, while He talks with us by the way, and opens to us the Scriptures. And if, Christian friends, you should now inquire, "What is great faith, and what is little faith?" the answer is at hand. The sinner who sees little in Christ is the man to whom we must say "0, thou of little faith" ; whereas the sinner who, in full consciousness of utter worthlessness, sees something at least of the greatness and the grace and the glory of the Saviour’s Person and work, and can scarcely turn away from the sight, this is the man who has great faith. For this man sees great, very great, reasons for cherishing the largest expectations. The Centurion, at whose faith Jesus marvelled, was simply a man who had got deep insight into Christ as One so mighty to deliver, that a single word from Him was enough. "He spake, and it was done" (Psalms 33:9). 0 that all of us may so discover the Saviour’s unsearchable love, and the infinite power of His atoning blood! This faith unites us to Him whom we believe. An old hymn sings of it in these lines, describing its uniting effect as a "believing INTO Christ":

"And he that into Christ believes, What a rich faith hath he! In Christ he moves, and acts, and lives, From self and bondage free.

He hath the Father and the Son, For Christ and he are now but one." But how, then, is faith spoken of in 1 Peter 1:21, as our having "faith in God"? Because faith in Christ admits us at once into the Father’s presence; nay, more, the believing man finds himself in the bosom of God, in union with Christ. But why does Romans 3:25, speak of it as ’faith in His blood’? The answer is, "A part is taken for the whole; it is faith in Him who shed that blood." And so also it is "faith in the righteousness of Him who is our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:1). And why does the Master contrast "fear" with this "faith"? (Mark 4:40). Because in the hour of fear we are looking on the stormy waves and listening to the wild winds; but when we look on the Saviour and listen to His voice, the faith banishes the fear. But who can sufficiently commend this grace of faith? We must not make the attempt. Only let us remind you that (2 Peter 1:5-7) faith is the root of every other grace; and it is by faith that the mighty power of God works in keeping you unto the salvation that is "ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:5).

S. Indwelling sin

Indwelling sin. And I John saw these things and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not : for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book ; worship God.

Revelation 22:8-9

'I, John ' ■ I, who was just a fisherman on the Lake of Galilee, called to follow Christ■ 'I saw all these great things.' Then we may see great things yet, as John did! It is interesting how many traits of John's character we find in this wonderful Book of Revelation. He tells us that when he saw his Master after so many years, he fell at His feet as dead, as much with delight as with fear. Then he tells us he 'wept much' when no one was found worthy to open the book; and how honestly he tells things about himself that are not to his credit. It is a great proof of grace when a man can do this■not only say he is a sinner, but tell things he did that were wrong. Our text tells us of the second time that John did this. The angel peremptorily commands him to rise: 'Why worship the servant when the Master is here?' From this incident let us learn the doctrine of indwelling sin in a believer's heart.

I. Indwelling sin as a doctrine.■A believer is entirely free from guilt. God cannot point to a spot of sin on a soul that has believed on Jesus. The believer is also free from the dominion of sin; but he is not free from the existence of sin in the heart. Never till we see Christ as He is shall we be free from the presence of sin.

'One look of Jesus as He is Will strike all sin for ever dead.'

'If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves.' If we say the root of sin is out of us we deceive ourselves. In Romans 7:21 Paul says, 'I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.' 'Law' means a powerful tendency, like a law. There are always remains of the old nature, and in the old nature there is always deceit. 'It doth not yet appear what we shall be.' We are only on the way to complete deliverance.

II. Indwelling sin illustrated by our text.■John was now about ninety years old. For seventy years he had walked close with God. We should have thought that indwelling sin was dead in him. But indwelling sin is often benumbed, but not dead. Paul had no sooner come down from Paradise and the third heavens than God says, 'It will be needful to send him a messenger of Satan, lest he be exalted above measure.' God did not say, 'I will strike his sin dead,' but 'I will keep it down.' There was indwelling sin still in Paul's heart. This disciple John, who had got on so far in the divine life, tells us that when he had been allowed to listen to and see, all that is recorded, and had heard the invitation to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, he fell at the angel's feet to worship him. Soon after this, John was walking through the New Jerusalem and saw its wondrous walls, its gates of pearl, the redeemed in their robes of white. Would you not have thought that his indwelling sin would be withered up now? 'When I heard these things, I fell down at the feet of the angel,' etc. He had

forgotten for a time the glory of the Master, wondering at the glory of the servant. We need to watch to the very end. Satan knows there is tinder in your heart, and he tries to throw in a spark. The beloved John is not perfect yet, though he has been through New Jerusalem.

III. Why does God leave a root of sin in our heart.■ He does not take away the existence of sin, but He does take away its dominion. It is like Psalms 110:2 : 'Rule . . . in the midst of thine enemies.' The consequences of indwelling sin being left in us are■

(1) To keep us from leaning on our personal holiness. We cannot point to one day of perfect obedience, to one work of perfect holiness. Till the last moment we have to stand upon the blood.

(2) To make us press onward to the day of Christ. 'When He shall appear, we shall be like Him.'

IV. How we are to deal in the meantime with this indwelling sin.■Sin in a believer is as really sin as in any other. I do not know that indwelling sin waxes weaker and weaker. But here is what we are to do.

We are to think of the indwelling Spirit; for as surely as we have indwelling sin we have the indwelling Spirit. Then we have help always at hand. It is like Christ in the ship. We think often we must meet trouble or temptation alone, forgetting the indwelling Spirit. He is not asleep, He is there in the ship, but He waits till we come to Him, and, as it were, awake Him. It is thus we get the victory over indwelling sin.

Another way is to feed faith. 'They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the Word of His testimony.' Nothing startles the devil like holding up the blood. He flees from it. Give every now and then a look to Christ, and if you look to Him He will look to you. Be of good cheer, believer! In spite of indwelling sin we shall not be shut out of heaven, and at length He will present us 'without fault before the throne of God!'

S. Jethro

Jethro.

Exodus 18:1-27

I. Jethro's name. - His personal name was Reuel or Raguel, 'God's Shepherd.' His father must have been a good man, not an idolater. Jethro is his official title, meaning his highness, or 'his excellency.' So this man was at once a priest of God and a man of high standing. He was a godly Gentile in the heart of a very wicked people, the Midianites. They were a vile, licentious nation, but Reuel kept himself unspotted from them, and in some quiet corner ruled his people, serving God.

II. Jethro's office. - Priest and prince. The word means both. As a priest he would present sacrifice. It is he who proposes to Moses to offer sacrifice. This is the very heart and essence of all true worship. The atoning sacrifice is the essence of all true religion. You have no true religion if it did not begin at the altar.

III. Jethro's personal character. - See him living a holy life in the midst of that licentious people. We have a pleasant picture of his quiet, happy family life. They were a united family, and a busy family. As, one evening, they tell their father the story of the day's work and what had happened to them, Jethro shows the kindness of his heart by sending for the stranger they had met with to his house. He finds - not a wandering idolater, but Moses, the man of God. For forty years Moses goes in and out with him, till one day he comes in with an awful solemnity over him, and his face lighted up with a divine lustre. Then he tells the story of the Burning Bush. Jethro sees at once that Moses must go, and they take a solemn farewell. You know all the great events that happened afterwards, till at last Moses and Jethro meet at the foot of Mount Horeb. What a meeting it would be, as they talked of all that God had done for His people!

IV. The memorable offering that followed the meeting (Exodus 18:12). - Round this altar are gathered Moses and Aaron and the elders of Israel, and they sit down to 'eat bread.' They had no bread but manna, and Jethro would taste it for the first time. It was a blessed meeting of communion with one another, and with God, the priest and king in the midst. Is this not a picture of our Priest and King at the Table when He spreads bread for us? But it is 'broken' bread.

V. Jethro's memorable advice to Moses (Exodus 18:17-23). - Notice his wisdom, tempering Moses' zeal. At the same time notice his compassion. Is it not like our High Priest? 'He knoweth our frame.' Moses listens and weighs the matter, and makes the change Jethro advises. Our High Priest does not want one man to do every thing. He sent His disciples out two and two. He knew human nature well, and He knew its tendency to self-sufficiency. Then He wanted them to share the work. It is never the duty of any one of God's people to be overburdened or worried, - ;as if the work could not be done without you! Could it not? Has God no other resources? Has He no other arrows in His quiver? God fills our hand with work, but He does not overburden us. When we are overburdened it is time to stop. The last we hear of Jethro is in the Exodus 18:27, when Moses 'lets him depart,' as if unwillingly, to his own land. His son Hobab (Numbers 10:29), though

unwilling at first, seems to have gone with Moses afterwards, for we find some of his descendants mentioned in Judges 1:16. Just as during our Lord's lifetime His brethren did not believe in Him, but afterwards we find them among His followers.

We say to you to-day, 'Come with us and we will do thee good.' Ours is not an oasis in the wilderness, but a land of corn and wine. Our Priest and King - in Him it is we find our portion, a heaven here on earth.

Chapter 115

S. Jonathan and his Armour-bearer

Jonathan and his Armour-bearer.

1 Samuel 14:1-52

I would like to have known the name of the Armour-bearer, but we are not told his name. There are a great many cases of useful persons whose names are hid. Sometimes God puts honour upon them before the church; sometimes He says, 'never mind, you are remembered before the Lord.' We shall hear the Armour-bearer's name read out at the Great Day.

God seems to like to work by two. Run over in your own mind instances of this: Moses and Aaron, Saul and Jonathan, Peter and John, Paul and Barnabas, Paul and Timothy, Paul and Silas, etc. The seventy were sent forth two and two. It shows how well God knows, and how well God recognises our human feeling. Somehow no one likes to work quite alone. (Almost the only exception to this that I have known was William Burns.) There is a great deal even in seeing the countenance of another. We might almost say that Christ Himself felt this. John, leaning on His bosom, seems to show His yearning for close companionship. To him Christ could whisper as he lay in His bosom. I think it is almost unnatural for one to wish to stand alone.

Then one helps another. Jonathan must have believed that the Armour-bearer's faith was as strong as his own, or he would not have asked him to go with him. How his faith would strengthen Jonathan's! It is no fault in a labourer to wish for sympathy, indeed it is a great means of grace. I do not think that the man who works alone has the promise of so much blessing as two working together. Moses' Song says, 'How should one chase a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight?' That is the divine measure. And God gave us this not only in a song but in a history. Samson took the jaw-bone and with it slew a thousand of the Philistines. Jonathan and his Armour-bearer first took the garrison, and then discomfited and put to flight the whole host, ten thousand at least! God has not written that without intending His Church in our day to learn from it. So, we say, one believer taking hold of God's name may do mightily, but two taking hold will do ten times more. Did not Christ say, 'If two of you shall agree as touching anything,' etc. I think we may safely say that that is one of the chief reasons why Christ sends His disciples two and two.

If human feeling requires this, and divine promise falls in with it, human frailty also requires it. It helps to give a blow to our selfishness. We need not think to isolate ourselves, though if He has isolated us that is another thing. If you found God using yourself alone, in spite of great grace there would be great danger of pride springing up in your heart. There are few conversions brought about by the instrumentality of one only. There are generally several links in the chain. The sower and the reaper go together. Peter in dealing with the lame man says, not 'Look on me,' but 'Look on us.' John was there, and John was helping perhaps with his prayers as much as Peter in his more active work. It promotes brotherly love and does a great deal to prevent spiritual pride. So it is with a minister and his people. The minister is blessed, and he finds out that a band of his people have been specially praying.

S. Kept by the power of God

Kept by the power of God.

1 Peter 1:5 ARE there any believers here who are afraid that they will some day bring disgrace on their profession ? Let them study these words. 'Kept' is the whole history of a believer's life. It tells us we are very weak, for we need to be kept; but, at the same time, it is a most comforting word, for it tells us we are worth keeping. God counts us a treasure worth keeping. It has wonderful power to give energy to believers. Rightly viewed, it bears on the interests of holiness in a wonderful manner. There may be ups and downs in the degrees of our faith and of our love, but we cannot be lost, for we are 'kept by the power of God.' The word throws emphasis on the mighty power that grasps us and keeps us; it is 'garrisoned by the power of God.' It is God's own power that encompasses us. None shall pluck us out of His hand.

■What from Christ the soul can sever, Bound by everlasting bands?

Once in Him, in Him for ever, Thus the eternal covenant stands.

None can pluck us from the Strength of Israel's hands.'

I. We are kept by the power of God.

We are in the arms of omniscience and omnipotence, for it is literally 'kept in the power of God.' We are lying upon that power, and we need it all. The power of the devil is tremendous, the power of the world is tremendous. Its current often carries us away. No wonder if we sometimes say, 'I shall one day perish.' We are 'kept by the power of God.' If you want to know the workings of that power, read Ephesians 1:19-23. What a defence! better than ten legions of angels; and yet we have that too. But Jude says, 'Keep yourselves.' We are to keep ourselves, but how? 'By faith.' God keeps us by making us keep ourselves 'by faith.'

II. We are kept by faith.

God's part is to put forth His power; our part is to put forth faith. God enables us to have faith, and He keeps it in us continually, and not all the power of hell can pluck that faith out of our heart. It never decays. We get power continually from God to go on believing from day to day. Our faith will not vanish. It may grow weaker, but it will not disappear. If we give way to unbelief we are letting go our hold of the chain that fastens us to the omnipotent arm. Faith implies that our eye is daily looking to the Cross of Christ - not looking to our feet, not looking about at what might terrify us, but 'looking unto Jesus.' We think of the righteousness He gives us, every day. We think of the blood shed to put away our sin, every day. We think of the new and living way opened to us by Christ, every day. Faith is always looking, not only to the work of Christ, but to His Person. 'He ever liveth to make intercession for us.' He lives to keep His vine and water it every moment. All the way along we may say 'There is life for a look at the Crucified One' - new life, every day. We are on the battlefield still, but we may sing 'God is our refuge and our strength.' When sickness comes we may feel ready to fail, but He will keep us. When death comes we may not be able to

think at all, but it does not matter. He will keep us. Preparation for death is almost an imagination. A believer does not prepare for death at all. Christ does it for him. The believer prepares for life. Beware only of slipping back. If you begin to think about yourself, about your frame of mind, about your cares, you may slip; but you will not fall. He who restored Peter will restore you. The fishermen in Brittany have a prayer they use when their boats are going out: 'O our God, keep us, for our boat is very small, and the ocean is very wide.' We shall be 'kept' till the salvation is revealed, and that may be at any moment. It is all ready - like a statue all complete, only waiting to be unveiled. God will keep us till then for our inheritance. He will not have an unlet house in New Jerusalem, no mansion where the grass grows before the door. Each mansion is reserved for some one. Our inheritance is 'reserved in heaven for us.'

Chapter 117

S. Leaning on the Beloved

Leaning on the Beloved.

'Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved ?'

Song of Solomon 8:5

Leaning on the Beloved is faith - faith which looks out to Christ, as distinguished from feeling, which looks in to self. Faith has regard to what the Lord has done and spoken, both in respect of justification and sanctification.

I. There are many cases in which we have no express promise to plead, and yet faith has room for work. The Syro-Phoenician woman had no such promise, neither had the centurion, and they were both Gentiles, and their requests were for temporal blessings. Yet in both cases Christ was delighted with their confidence in Him. These were the only cases in which He said He had found great faith, and He gave them all they wanted. The Syro-Phoenician woman had heard about Christ and His ways, the kindness and compassion He showed to multitudes. What He did for others He could do for her daughter, and she determined to apply to Him. All apparent repulse could not shake her out of faith in Himself. 'Truth, Lord, yet' -. The centurion felt utterly unworthy, and had very low thoughts of himself but he had most lofty thoughts of Christ's Person, and true thoughts of His heart. 'Speak the word only.' Faith believes no ill of God, but all good of Him. It leans on His graciousness, even when it cannot point to His faithfulness and say, 'Do as Thou hast said.'

II. The Lord is delighted with faith manifested in this form. 'Do this for me, for Thou art gracious,' rather than 'because Thou art faithful.' David showed this faith in God when he preferred to fall into the hands of God rather than into those of men. Such confidence in Him gives Christ joy. Shall we not gratify Him by confiding in Him, whether we have a promise or no?

III. The Lord owned the faith of these two by doing what He had not promised to do, after trying their faith. Similar cases are ever occurring amongst ourselves. You are praying for a friend in sickness or trouble. You can't go to Him saying He has promised to remove these, and it may not be for His glory that they should be removed. Perhaps you look at the verse, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in faith, believing, ye shall receive,' and yet you can't put your foot on a promise for the blessing asked, and so you can't ask believing that you have it. But yet faith has its sphere here. It looks at God's graciousness - just what Abraham did on Mount Moriah. He offered up Isaac, believing that the Lord who had given him would raise him up again, though he knew not how. God has not bound Himself to give you what you ask, but your prayer will be heard, and He will have respect to your faith in Him. So with prayer for the conversion of friends, either for an individual, a family, or a community. He does in hundreds of cases what we ask because He has respect to our faith in Him. But, nevertheless, all who are prayed for are not saved. Were it so, what would be the result? If it were certain that all prayed for by Christian friends would be saved, the unsaved would put their trust in these prayers. Ambrose's assurance to Monica, the mother of Augustine, 'The

child of so many prayers cannot be lost,' was only strong feeling. Absalom was such a one, and yet, 'O Absalom, my son, my son, would God I had died for thee!' Unconverted one, repent and believe the Gospel, or prayers for you will be in vain.

Hold up to God, in pleading for others, the atoning sacrifice, and point to Pentecost in your pleadings for the souls of men, and, at the same time, testify to them of these - pleading with God for them, and pleading with them for God.

Believer, have you ever taken your stand on a promise and got all the blessing contained in it?

Chapter 118

S. Love of the Father

Love of the Father

Ingrese sus comentarios aquí“For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day,” (John 6:38-40).

None of the Evangelists or Apostles speak so much of the Father as John, who knew most of his Son Jesus Christ, and leant upon his bosom. The reason is, John felt that the mind of the Father and the mind of the Son were the same—entirely the same. He was; therefore, engaged in the same topic when he unfolded the Father’s love.

It is remarkable that it is this apostle who records what Jesus revealed concerning the Father, and how Jesus delighted to point his disciples to him. Thus, he shows us in the context, (John 6:37), that Jesus went into the secret of his pavilion when his soul was grieved by the perverse unbelief of men. In that hour, when Jesus could find no refreshment in the men around him, he turned back for a moment’s joy to the Father’s love. “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me!” He bathes his soul in that depth of eternal love. He surveys those given to him—Abel, and the saints of his age—Abraham, and his faithful ones—Peter, John, Mary, Lydia—the few in Sardis—the souls under the altar—and, as he surveys them, he sees his Father’s love sparkle from each one, for these are his Father’s gift; and forthwith his own love overflows on all that stand by. He flashes out his own love when he in the same moment cries, “And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.” It seems that in that hour he thought upon the future. He saw, as he uttered the words, “All whom the Father giveth me,” how man would be prone to take this reference to the Father’s love as indicating a difference between the grace of the Father and of the Son. He saw that many would say, that Jesus damped the rising hope of the coming sinner when he said, “All that the Father giveth me,” and therefore does he forthwith cast out that other cord of love, “And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.” So great is my Father’s love to me and to perishing men, that assuredly there shall be souls that come to me; and so great is my love and his love alike, that no coming one shall on any account be cast out.

Dear brethren, if the snow had never lain on the tops of Lebanon, Jordan would never have been full or overflowing. There would have been no Savior’s grace for man to know and feel, if the Father had not “so loved the world” as to give us his only begotten. Yet often is the Father’s love suspected or forgotten, although he is the fountain-head, and all the streams of grace have had their source in him. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights,” (James 1:17). O brethren, we should love him as Jesus did. Come and see what wondrous reason there is why we should do so.

I. The Father's amazing love appears in his sparing this guilty world, though he spared not the angels that sinned:

You know that it is the Father's part to arrange, and purpose, and decree—it is his to decide and appoint whatsoever cometh to pass. Now, in a past eternity, he had the case of this fallen world under consideration. He might have decreed immediate woe as soon as sin should be committed by men. For sin deserves not only eternal, but immediate curse; and he had seen meet so to determine in regard to those angels who should leave "their first habitation." But the barren fig-tree was spared—this most guilty world received a day of grace. It became the very theatre for the display of long-suffering; so that our text exhibits to us the Son of God walking on a spared world, digging at the roots of its barren trees. "Herein is love!" For to spare this whole world for a time, implied the intention of enduring man's rebellion and man's unceasing provocations, for at least six thousand years. It was equivalent to the Father saying, "Lo! I will submit to bear man's apostasy—to allow him to provoke the eyes of my glory—to wag his head at me and say, "Can he see through the dark cloud "?" —to cast up mire and the very filth of hell upon my pure white throne—nay, to aim at "erasing my love from my own heart, and even strike at my own being!" O did it not require love ineffable ere this could be resolved upon! This guilty world's day of grace is a most marvelous proof and manifestation of Jehovah's depth of love. And, thou wicked and slothful servant, who sayest, "He is an austere master," shalt be confounded for ever. The Father needs do no more than point to this time of most undeserved long-suffering. You speak of mercy; and some of you say, He could not be a God of mercy if be cast away so many souls; but already has his treatment of you displayed his mercy. Your day of grace proves him to be a loving God. 0 man, see to it before you are summoned to the Judgment Seat; for your plea, drawn from his mercy, is already dismissed. "What will you do in the day of visitation ?" You abuse your day—you sit down to eat and drink and rise up to play—you dance before your golden calf—and then complain of a long-suffering God, because his mercy bears with you only for a lifetime, and will not wink at your sin to all eternity!

II. The Father's amazing love appears in choosing some of this guilty world, who should certainly be to the praise of his glory: Our text refers to this in the expression, "All that the Father hath given me." And so at other times—"Thou gavest them me," (John 17:6); and "The men whom thou hast given me;" "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved," (Ephesians 1:5-6).

Now, there was a mystery of love in this election. It lies in the fact that, but for this further determination of the Father, none of our world would after all have been saved. To give men full liberty to come and be saved is love indeed. To procure and provide a ransom available for all who do come, whatever they be, is love yet higher still. But love can ascend to a height beyond this—far beyond it. It has ascended infinitely higher, for it has resolved to draw many, many thousands to itself, who otherwise would not have come at all. The Lord saw, dear brethren, that none in all this world would have come—not one shipwrecked man would ever have swam to shore, for he hated the shore more than the very waves that lashed him. No manslayer would have crossed the threshold of the city of refuge; he would rather linger in the open plain and risk the blow of the avenger. No debtor would have deigned to accept the payment—no captive to

receive the ransom; even though all was free—even though entreated to do so by God himself—even though hell was behind, and heaven before. The world's corruption was deep beyond conception. Earth was an open sepulcher; and each man hated his God. It was in reference to what he saw of this fearful enmity that Jesus said, in melancholy pity, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him," (John 6:44). They are so totally depraved, they are so wedded to their lusts, they are so gross, and sensual—so truly dead in sin—they do not wish to be freed from their covetousness, their envy, their lust, their power to draw draughts of pleasure from ungodly revelry, or from intense engrossment with the lawful occupations of life. They hide among the trees of the garden at the first sound of the voice of the Lord, even when he comes with grace on his lips, and goodwill to men in his heart.

O brethren, to be able to love any of such a race, argues strange and mysterious depth of love in God the Father. And he did fix his love on many of these; he did it freely, and he did it determinedly. So deliberate, decided, determined was this eternal love of the Father, that it made success certain in the case of each on whom it was fixed. It was such a love, that its plans and purposes implied the operation of each person of the Godhead. The Spirit must go forth and draw, and the Son go forth and die. This was the Father's plan! O what amazing love is here! What thoughts are in his heart to usward! He will not let go his purpose of having some of our fallen race standing round his throne.

1. Anxious souls! Surely the God that would do this from all eternity, is a God of infinite grace. What a bosom is this to lean upon what an inducement to draw near! Does it not confirm you in the belief of that declaration, "Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out!" He who makes such provision to ensure that many shall come, is one who will in nowise reject any that are coming!

2. Unawakened men! There is nothing in the character of God that can account for your treatment of him; —there is nothing in him or his ways that can excuse your hatred. It is the fearful depravity of your own souls that alone can account for your utter ungodliness. Your blood is on your own heads! Your heart may be as deceitful as it is wicked, so that you may not believe your own deplorable state of enmity; but Jehovah has said by the lips of his Son concerning all that thus resist him, "Ye have hated me without a cause!"

III. The Father's amazing love appears in his giving Christ to be the sinner's way of salvation:

It was he who made a new and living way for a sinner's return to him. "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life," (John 6:40). "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish," (John 3:16). And hence the name given him in 2 Corinthians 1:3, "The Father of mercies;" and in Romans 8:32, "He that spared not his Son." Had he for once caused one ray of the inaccessible light to shoot down to this earth in order to teach us our state of darkness—had he shown us one crown worn above, or one triumphal palm—had he caused us to hear one note of heavenly melody—all this would have left us inexcusable, if we did not ever after covet earnestly the things above. But he took the best gift in all his treasures; nay, he took the Son that was in his bosom, and gave him to man. Angels saw it done, and rapturously sang, "To you is born a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord!" and all men that have had anointed eyes have responded as they gazed, "To us a child is born unto us a son is given!" It is by this measuring-line that you must fathom the depth of the ocean. It is by this fact that you must try to measure the

unsearchable love of the Father. You test your fellow-creatures" love by the sacrifices they would make for you. You judge of Abraham's love to his God by his sacrifice of Isaac. Now judge of the love of the Father by his gift of his Son.

It was the Father saying, "I cannot give up my law and my holiness for that would be ceasing to be God. I cannot hide my righteousness and resign its demands; for that would ruin all. I cannot put the burden on my angels; for they could not bear it one hour. I cannot leave it on man; for then, not one of them should ever stand before me. But this is my will. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd; let man be dipped in the blood of the Almighty's fellow!" He not only gave him, but substituted him in the room of the guilty— "the just for the unjust to bring us unto God."

O brethren, the Father resolved that all salvation shall be found in the Son. He carefully avoided leaving any of the details of salvation for us to perform. The Father was he who provided that the chastisement of our peace should be laid upon another; and no atoning tears left for us to shed—no atoning suffering left for us to endure—not one atoning sigh left for us to heave. Therefore, "it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he put him to grief," (Isaiah 53:10); and this he did with such calm, decided love, that the appeal of his beloved Son to him, "Father if it be possible, let this cup pass," served only to manifest his long-settled and unchanging plan.

He had resolved that he should have children and sons from among men; but he had further resolved, that their way of becoming his children and sons should all express his love. It was to be free; they were to come to him from the far country "in a chariot paved with love." All he asked of them was, that they should ascend the chariot and be carried home; for as many as received Jesus were at once to receive the privilege of sons of God. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called sons of God," (John 3:1); but equally amazing that we should become sons in a way so free. It costs Jesus all; it costs us nothing. Every drop of the vial falls on Jesus, and not even the dregs are left. Every arrow that was needed to express the Lord's hatred of sin and vindicate his law, sinks into the heart of Jesus, and is aimed at him by the Father's hand! All penalties are exacted of him; all obedience is rendered by him; and all this is done according to, and in exact fulfillment of, the Father's purpose of love to us. These are just the thoughts of the Father toward us, carried out into accomplishment.

Now, brethren, the Father, having given us this way and warrant for coming to him, manifests his love yet more by shutting you up to the necessity of taking this one way, this only warrant. "Every one that hath heard and learnt of the Father cometh unto me," (John 6:45), said Jesus; and "no man cometh unto the Father but by me," (John 14:6). You are reduced to the necessity of being saved by a free salvation. It is written, "Him hath God the Father sealed," (John 6:27). He has made Jesus to be your Joseph; he has given him the royal signet. When you cry for bread, he says to all, "Go to Joseph," (Genesis 41:55). Jesus has the seal of the Father. O with such a warrant, and going to one whose love is such that it planned this way, one whose bosom is filled with calm, determined, eternal love, can you hesitate as to duty? Can you hesitate as to the way of safety? Nothing but enmity on your part, and deep-rooted dislike, can account for your resting contented without possession of the Father's gift. What more will you venture to say the Father ought to have given? See what he has already given, and given without any claim on your part. If you are lost, your ruin will lie on yourself. Will ever your blasphemous lips dare to lay your damnation to the charge of such a God? Oh, fall in with his plan of grace! The plan that such a

God proposes, must be one worthy of such a sinner's immediate acceptance. And immediate acceptance is the only manner in which such a sinner can show any due sense of the free grace of his God.

You who do already believe, be reminded that it is to the Father you owe all your peace, and joy, and blessed assurance of eternal life. You were once far off; and once you were only anxiously wishing to find his favor. But he showed your anxious souls his economy of grace—he brought you to drink of his living waters that are without price—he spread out the warrant before your eyes, and you were made to see that there was nothing left for you to complete. The Father's plan was so gracious, that, in seeing the Son, you saw a finished salvation. Oh, give glory evermore at once to "Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb."

IV. The amazing love of the Father appears in his revealing himself to us.

He does not act through an interpreter only, but he makes himself known. He gives us, as it were, the means of searching and trying his heart, that we may be quite sure of his whole mind towards us, and that his matchless character may draw our souls to himself.

He does this through the incarnation of Jesus. For we are told in our text, "I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me," —that is, not to exercise any separate will of mine as man, but as man to exhibit and to do the Father's will. All, therefore, that is in Christ, expresses the mind of his Father also. "I am in the Father, and the Father in me," (John 14:10). "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," (John 14:9).

O brethren, there is manifold love in his revelation to us of the Father. It is not only that our suspicious hearts would never have been quite at rest unless we had thus known the Father also; but it gives us a view of his willingness to condescend to us in any way that may more fully draw us, or be more likely to induce us to love "the Lord our God with all our heart, and all our soul and all our mind, and all our strength." He seems herein to come out of his "light inaccessible," that he may become known to his fallen creatures. This is like humiliation; it is the Father's condescension. If Solomon, in order to engage the confidence of some loathsome leper, had come forth in all his glory, in his royal apparel, and with his golden sceptre, then would all the land have rung with the story of his condescending kindness. And it is not less that our God has done. He has come forth that we might know him. He has put on the robe of humanity, wherein he could be best looked upon by our mortal eye, and he has shewn himself in all his grace and attractive love to a fallen world.

Herein is love! the Father will go to the utmost length in order to draw you back from the pit. Like the Grecian mother who, by her song, drew back her willful child from the edge of the awful precipice, and brought it to her bosom secure; so the Lord, by the discovery of his infinitely glorious and gracious nature, would draw you from your sin. He would present to your idolatrous and adulterous eyes a sight more attractive than earth, in its softest forms, can furnish. He would keep you back from hell, O sinner, by manifesting himself to you as altogether lovely! O how deep is your corruption! How strong your enmity! How unconquerable your perversity! You hate God, after seeing him revealed in Jesus! Every exhibition of greatness, mingled with grace in Jesus, was the revelation of the Father also! Every discovery of patience, long-suffering, and grieved love—every time Jesus went apart to weep in secret places for the pride of men, it was the

Father's feeling also. When Jesus beheld Jerusalem, and wept over it, O there was a tender pity there that just pictured forth the Father's yearning compassion—as if the Father himself had come forth from the "light inaccessible," and had spoken in the hearing and sight of men, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim; how shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah, and set thee as Zeboim?" Nor is it less the Father's mind, when Jesus cries in your ears, "Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out." This is the Father's will who has sent him. As if he knew that you might say, on hearing that it is certain that all shall come who are given to Christ, "Ah, then, perhaps though I were to come, I would not be welcomed," the Saviour says, and the Father speaks by his lips, "Him that cometh I will in nowise cast out." You shall never be rejected, if you come—never on the ground that you were too great a sinner—never on the ground that, though you come, you were not given to Christ. "You shall in nowise be cast out." Any question regarding the Father's secret purposes, or the Father's accurate foreknowledge of who are his own—any question of this sort is quite out of your province. It is friends who get acquainted with the secrets of another's heart; it is not strangers. You are to come on the strength of the warrant alone; and so you will become a friend and a child of his family, and be no more cast out.

V. The Father's amazing love appears in appointing the eternal reward for redeemed sinners: Our text says, "I came down to do the will of him that sent me," and "this is the Father's will that hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day," (John 6:39.) Therefore, says Jesus, "I will raise him up at the last day," (John 6:40).

It is remarkable how the Father delights to honor the Son while wearing our nature. It is of him in our nature, nay, in the act of bearing away, like the scapegoat, our sins on his person, that it is written, "Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, and take it up again," (John 10:17). It is in our nature that he is to judge, and to him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess when he appears, clothed in our nature, and wearing the many crowns of this earth's dominion. Now, love to him in our nature is love to us. O, then, brethren, read here the Father's delight in our race. He takes our nature, in the person of Jesus, to his nearest presence; he sheds round it, in the person of Jesus, his brightest beams; he places it on his right hand in majesty. But farther, it is written here, that the rising of the believers in the resurrection of the just is appointed of the Father— "that he should raise it up again at the last day." It is he who has purposed the glorious triumph over death, which believers gain in the resurrection morn. It is he who planned that they should live and reign with Christ, blessed and holy, children of the first resurrection, and never subject to the second death. It is he who blesses them; for the King shall say, "Come ye blessed of my Father," (Matthew 25:34). It is he who bestows the kingdom upon them; "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed me," (Luke 22:29). It is he who gives them power over the nations; for Christ in giving his power says, "Even as I received of my Father," (Revelation 2:27). It is the Father who introduces them to the glory of Christ, (John 17:24). It is in the Father's house they dwell—in his many mansions, (John 14:2). And even as Jesus went to the Father so do they; for they are "with him where he is," in the immediate presence of the Father.

Thus, brethren, every token of love, in that blessed kingdom, bears the impress of the Father's grace. Every glory there sparkles with beams of the Father's love. O what a God of love is our God. And it is to his bosom the returning sinner comes. Sweet and blessed hope! to be near him, to try the depths of his heart—to have access through Jesus in our nature to his bosom—and so to

be able to pour out our heart to him, and feel him pour out his to us. This is life eternal. A child of God once asked, in meditating on the words—“Where thou causest thy flock to rest” —where this resting-place might be thought to be? One said, “In Jesus.” But the other replied, “It is even in the Father’s bosom.” And truly this is a believer’s deepest rest. “By him we believe in God,” (1 Peter 1:21), that is, the Father; and “we come unto God by him,” (Hebrews 7:25). It is your place of rest, believer. It is the inner apartment of the pavilion—the secret of the tent. It is the farthest off spot from earth, it is out of sight of its pleasures, joys, gain, ambition. “Love not the world, neither the things of the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him,” (1 John 2:15). “Little children, ye have known the Father,” (1 John 2:13).

O beloved, before I conclude, let me once more cast out the cords of love to draw the rebellious among you. This God is our God. This is he who assures you of his desire for your salvation, “I have no pleasure at all in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord, but rather that he turn from his ways and live,” You are the worm that tried to crawl up to his throne, and to sit down as sovereign, and yet he has not crushed you! Your bosom is the seat of fearful sin, hatred of the holy one, dark suspicions of his sincerity, fond plans of self-exaltation, selfish schemes for present indulgence, ungodly fancies, sensual, earthly, devilish desires. Yet still our God, even the Father, laments over you. He takes no blame to himself for your wretched degradation; for, on the contrary, he has at every step cast hindrances in your way to hell. He laments over you, “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help found!” He loved Jesus all the more for dying and rising again (John 10:17), because it opened up the channel of love; it gave vent to his love to man. Only draw near and see this ocean. It is the same ocean of love which is seen when you look on a dying Saviour; but it is the same ocean seen from another point of view. And what can exceed the power of the appeal which God hereby makes to you, when he declares, “That it is not the love of the Son alone, but the unbought, free, eternal love of Godhead!” It is the Father who lays down Jesus for a foundation stone, and cries to a careless world, “Behold! I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone.” It is the Father who calls and invites, “Behold! my servant whom I have chosen! mine elect in whom my soul delighteth!” It is the Father who points to the cross and cries to all the earth, “I, even I am he who blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own name’s sake, and will not remember thy sins.” This is the Father’s will, and Christ himself is the herald that proclaims it to a lost world, “This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life!”

Chapter 119

S. Meeting as a congregation

Meeting as a congregation.

"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them"

(Matthew 18:20).

NOTES OF A SERMON DELIVERED IN FINNIESTON FREE CHURCH, GLASGOW, ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 1, 1889.

I believe you will find the origin of public worship in the book of Genesis, that book of beginnings (Genesis 4:26).

Enos, the son of Seth, was the first preacher, and ministered to the first congregation; for so we understand the record, which says, "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord"; that is, they began to meet in public assemblies. It was the first of the happy companies whose gatherings together have been continued ever since. In the Songs of Zion, special honour is accorded to those meetings of the saints: "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob" (Psalms 87:2). The public assembly of His people on Mount Zion God loved more than all other gatherings, because this was a loud proclamation of His name; all the more because these gathered ones met with their eye on the altar and the atoning sacrifice. The sympathy, too, of such worshipping companies has always helped to give victory over selfishness. And the Lord gives more blessing when many are together than at other times, for this very end.

We sometimes hear people, whose indolence and selfishness keep them at home, say, "We are as well occupied at our own firesides on the Sabbath day as we would be in God’s house." That cannot be true, since God has enjoined us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Hebrews 10:25). And it is very noticeable that, when a man ceases to come to the house of God, you invariably find, as a result, that family worship has no longer a place in that home; and, too often, the worship of the closet languishes, even if it does not cease. In the sanctuary God has special blessings which we must lose when we forsake the assembling of ourselves together. God likes (we may say) to give His best blessings to more than one at a time, on the lines of Ephesians 3:18 : "With all saints." And while this is the Lord’s rule, you will find also this to be true in your own experience that the blessing you get along with hundreds of others is far more plentiful, and, perhaps, far deeper, than what you get alone. Suppose a shower of rain falling falls only on you, it would give you some refreshment, no doubt; but if, at the same time, it soaks the ground all around you, and makes every tree and every blade of grass drop with moisture, and softens the ground all around, the coolness and the refreshing is wonderfully intensified. When God’s people come thus together in the name of the Lord, the Lord makes this His special time for sending down a plentiful rain. But now, let me ask you to notice in this passage (1) Our presence together in Christ’s name; (2) Christ’s presence with us when we are gathered together in His name.

(1) Our presence together in Christ’s name. The Lord expected that in all after times His people should thus gather together. He takes it for granted that this shall be the case. The words, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name," take for granted that this is a practice that would never fail. We referred to Hebrews 10:25, but long before, in the book of the Prophet Malachi (Malachi 3:16) the Lord had made the gathering together of His people an ordinance: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another (you can see that this is a gathering together in His name), and the Lord hearkened "■hearkened to what was going on in this meeting, and marked down the attendance in His book of remembrance: "They shall be Mine in the day when I make up My jewels." In the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:42), and other passages, you will notice how continually the early Christians gathered together. Indeed, it is spoken of as a test of true discipleship: "They continued steadfastly in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship." It was Christ Himself who, by His example and suggestions, introduced this meeting together among His own. But you may say: "What is meant by ’In My name?’ " It is not a mere gathering together in a meeting, for meetings may be convened for various purposes - social, political, or otherwise. It refers to none of these. The magnet that gathers this meeting is "Christ’s name." "When two or three are gathered together in My name." Think of what this name means. I refer to Malachi 3:16 : "They that feared the Lord spoke often one to another," and there you will find the Lord says, "A book of remembrance was written before Him for those . . . who thought upon His name." The name of the Lord expresses the sum of God’s perfections. In another of the prophets (Micah 5:4), you have it said: "He shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God." "In the name." How can they meet "in the name of the Lord?" The meaning is this: We come together to think of the Lord - His perfection and all concerning Him. A congregation of true worshippers is a congregation of those who "think upon His name." Often do we find the worshippers declaring, "We have thought of Thy loving-kindness in the midst of Thy temple"; "according to Thy name, O God, so is Thy praise unto the ends of the earth." At one time we are led to deep meditation on His loving-kindness as a part of His name; at another time of His holiness; at another of His justice - His determination to deal with unrighteousness in the way of vengeance. And then we stand still in amazement at the grace, the free love, that brings to us salvation. He has given us a Saviour, and in that name "Jesus," Jehovah who saves, is everything that enables us to approach the Holy One. You thus understand how meeting in the name" implies that we stand in the sunshine of that name, and bask in the bright rays that there fall on our souls. Might I even put it this way? Our meeting together as Christians should be like that of Moses, when the Lord came to him and put him in the cleft of the rock. His prayer went up: "Lord, I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory" (Exodus 33:18). (You prayed thus before you came together?) And the Lord answered the prayer when the glory passed by, and His own voice proclaimed His own great and glorious name: "The Lord, the Lord" (Jehovah, Jehovah), "the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty." We meet to hear the proclamation of that name from the Cross of Christ, where it is we find the full significance of the Master’s words in John 17:6, John 17:26 : "I have manifested Thy name." Moses was so filled with adoring wonder and awe that he bowed his head toward the earth and worshipped. Blessed are we when our meeting together in that name affects us as it affected Moses. Are we not approaching at such a time the worship of the heavenly temple, where they ofttimes "fall down before the Lamb"? And if in the Old Testament days the worshippers found

intense delight in "gathering together," how much more should we in the fuller light of the Gospel? They longed, yea, fainted for the courts of the Lord. Their very heart and flesh cried out for the living God, who was to meet them there (Psalms 84:2). Oh, with what joy they used to go up to the house of God, to "Give thanks to the name of the Lord!" (Psalms 122:1-4). Are you, brethren, able every returning Lord's day to say, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."

(2) But I pass on, secondly, to speak of Christ's presence with those who have come together to enjoy the sunshine of His name. Our first and all-including loss by the Fall, was loss of communion with God. But all we lost the Lord restores to us in redemption. All our gatherings together may afresh bring before us the restoration of this communion that we had lost. The Lord comes to meet us ere ever we have come to meet Him. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I already present. Some may be here who have not found Him at home. We bring you good tidings. We tell you that it is His wont to reveal Himself to souls in the meeting of His saints. Our text declares: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I." "There am I." The Lord Jesus meets those of His people who are thus gathered together, in a special and peculiar manner, such as He is not wont to do in your retirement. He met Cephas, no doubt, alone after His resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:5); but that was an exceptional case, and not meant to be the same as meeting Him in the gathered assembly. It may be to such times of meeting that reference is made in the Song of Solomon, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest." And the answer is: "If thou knowest not. . . go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock and feed . . . beside the shepherds tents." (Song of Solomon 1:8). Christ Himself has special delight and fellowship with us in such gatherings. The Shepherd likes to be in the midst of His flock. But what does He then do? He says, "There am I." Let us ask what this implies, "There am I." There is an attraction in that announcement, surely. Even if He did nothing, it is something to be near Him. There is sunshine there, though He should never speak a word. Might I say, it is as when the mother's little ones find their enjoyment enhanced amazingly by the simple presence and smile of her who so loves and whom they so love? But more still is implied when He adds, "In the midst of them." It is as if He would say, "I am to be the very heart of the meeting, and within the reach of all alike; not at one corner only." You often hear a needless addition made to this clause, "In the midst of them 'to bless them and do them good.' " Keep it as it stands; let the simple words speak without paraphrase or addition. There is (we said before) majesty and a strange attractiveness in this simple clause, "There I am. It is as when He came to His disciples (John 6:20-21), saying, "I am He." Notice the effect, the calm, the peace. "Immediately the ship was at land." How divinely helpful, "I am there!" "I am there!" But always take in along with this, "In the midst of them. " It suggests so much more: "I have come into the very centre and heart of the meeting." No sooner has He overtaken the two disciples going to Emmaus than you can easily see that, as He walks between them and communes with them, quickly sadness gives way to secret joy, till their hearts burn within them. And we go up to the Throne and observe, in the book of Revelation, the position He is wont to take. If we find Him "walking amid the golden candlesticks," then at another time, He is "the Lamb in the midst of The Throne" (Revelation 7:17), the heavenly companies all gathered round Him!

Perhaps for this, among other reasons, that visit is fully recorded in John 20:19, as a sample of what might be expected at such gatherings. He came to the upper room. Notice in passing,

nobody heard the door open. Nobody, to this hour, knows how He got into the upper room. The disciples were met together in His name to talk about Him, and to think about Him, and the doors were fast closed and barred. But all at once they found Jesus standing in the midst. For it is silently He comes in among us, unseen; and all at once we find that He is here! On that same occasion His first word was, "Peace be unto you," showing them His hands that spoke of the Cross, and pointing to His side that was pierced. Is it not just thus that He wishes us to be ever blessed when we are gathered in His name? He begins by speaking peace to our souls, peace through the blood of the Cross, through His pierced hands and side. You need never "gather in His name" without receiving a fresh view of the blood of Christ that gives peace to the soul. Brethren, pray for your pastor, that he may never, to the day of his death, preach a single sermon, or be with you in any gathering together in His name, without pointing you to the blood shed for the remission of sin. But there is still more here. After He had thus spoken, and led them anew to the source of true peace, He "breathed on them," saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." When you gather together as a congregation, let me ask, Do you expect to receive the Holy Ghost? Perhaps you reply, "If we are believers, have not we the Holy Spirit already?" The Holy Spirit is in you as the water in a well; but the well may be very far sunk down, and so you need to cry, "Spring up, O well !" And every time you come together in the house of God you have special reason for expecting the springing up of this well, for you have this promise, and you can hold it up to the Lord: "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" A father gives to his little children, not once or twice only, but from day to day, and likes to have them continually coming. Even so, disciples who have the Spirit already come to get greater communications of the same Spirit. See that you always come up in the expectation of receiving the "eye-salve" to enable you to see more clearly; to get more from Christ's fulness of the fruits of the Spirit - "love, joy, peace, gentleness, meekness," and the like. But even this is not all. He added, when breathing the Spirit upon them, "As My Father has sent Me, even so send I you." Go away now, and tell others about salvation and the Saviour. Go and spread the tidings to all men of "peace" by the Saviour's work: "The chastisement of our peace was on Him." Yes, remember every time we come together and as we go hence: "I send you, as the Father sent Me," to spread the tidings which have brought peace to your own souls. Sit not down in selfish enjoyment when your hearts are burning within you after some fresh discovery of the riches of grace in John 3:16 : "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Go and tell men these same tidings. And if more were needed to induce you to do so, this might be added, viz., in the very act of telling your fellow-men of this salvation you yourself get immense gain. In a word, if you would have your sanctification carried on, if you would have your own communion perfected, go forth with these words ringing in your ears: "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you."

Come together, then, for these ends. In Revelation you see how Christ sends messages to "the churches," His gathered ones that meet in His name, but always with the ulterior view of their giving to others the water of life that they themselves have been tasting. Oh, dear people, let us seek to have more profitable meetings this winter than we have ever had. Let us seek to get a fresh start to-day in this direction. How much of this kind of gathering together shall there be? Will you every Sabbath drink of this well and run with its living waters to others? It is not eloquence, nor intellectual effort that the Holy Spirit delights to use; it is the preaching of "peace by the blood of the Cross." Let us, in this way, seek conversion in all our meetings, in our Sabbath schools, and

wherever souls can be dealt with. Oh, let there be none here merely sitting on the steps of the ark, liking to hear that the door is still open - sitting, we say, on the steps, but not within, and so in danger every moment, for the door may be shut and the flood sweep them away. Shall the ark of salvation stand open while you will not cross the threshold? Who among us are merely formalists? You are so if you do not "gather together in Christ's name." You are mere formalists if you cannot truly sing that Psalm in which we declare: One thing I desired of the Lord, and I will seek after, that I may behold the beauty of the Lord, and inquire in His temple. You are mere formalists if not meeting with Christ, though you come to the meeting-place. But when you come with the full purpose and positive desire to behold the beauty of the Lord, then you may expect a meeting with Christ. From 1 Corinthians 14:23-25, we see that occurrences like the following often took place in the early Church: A hearer - not in Christ - would drop in, perhaps from mere curiosity, knowing that it was a gathering of those who were met in Christ's name. He sees that the worshippers are truly devout, and are seeking the Lord in downright earnestness. He sees that they listen with eagerness to the word spoken, and that they pray and sing with the soul and the heart. He may not know that that overpowering conviction which seizes on his soul proceeds from the presence of that Christ who said, "There am I in the midst." But so it is; and this Zaccheus-hearer falls down and worships and goes home to report, "God is in them of a truth."

Oh, brethren, is there convincing and convicting work in our meetings? Are there such prayers and praises, such intense feeling, that even a careless one, hearing what is spoken and listening to the prayers and to the songs of praise, is overawed in his inmost soul? Brethren, will you, henceforth, more than ever, aim at having such results in our congregational meetings? Oh, brethren, every week expect and bespeak His blessing. If the Lord is present, every gathering will be a memorable one, because from our gathering together there will be tidings carried up to heaven that will create new joy in heaven over at least one sinner repenting. And look forward. Oh, for that eternal meeting, "For ever with the Lord!" "The Lamb in the midst of the throne." Oh, when shall it come!

Chapter 120

S. Mercy Seat

Mercy Seat “It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul,” (Leviticus 17:11).

“There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat,” (Exodus 25:22).

READER! Have you ever felt your need of salvation! Have you ever sought it, as one who must obtain it—or perish? When a sinner is first brought to feel sin to be a burden—when he feels wrath abiding upon his soul, and that his whole past life has been a life without God—his question is, “What must I do to be saved?” “Is it possible that my sin can ever be forgiven by a God who is angry with the wicked every day?” The awakened publican’s cry is, “O God, be merciful to me!” And this cry finds God in the very attitude of grace, proclaiming his name. “The Lord, the Lord God merciful,” and pointing to the Savior on the throne of grace, where we may obtain mercy. In Old Testament times, the Lord set forth our condition on the one hand, and His respect toward us in the other, in one part of the furniture of the Tabernacle. He did this in the mercy-seat. This name is given to that part of the ark, in the holy of holies, whereon the blood used to be sprinkled on the day of atonement. The mercy-seat was the lid of the ark, as broad and long as the ark itself, and made of the same precious material; and the lid, or mercy-seat, being sprinkled with blood seven times, set forth to us the blood of Jesus Christ, which cleanseth from all sin.

Now, it is where the blood is, that mercy for sinners is to be found. For they deserve to die; and their deserved doom must be exhibited, and exacted at the hands of another, if they themselves are to escape. Therefore, the place where mercy can be found, is the place where the blood is. No other place, O sinner, in the wide world for you! But to that place you may come—nay, must come, if you would escape the wrath of God.

(1) You must come as a sinner. You must come with nothing but sin. On the day of atonement, the priest in Israel who came forward to the mercy-seat, laid down nothing but sin on that blood-sprinkled lid. He showed a sinner’s way of coming to the Lord; and yet he brought nothing what-ever but sin, to be laid down there. So the sinner, in coming to the mercy-seat, brings nothing but sin. He confesses the sin he was born with: “Behold! I was shapen in iniquity”; and lays it down on the sprinkled blood. He confesses his inheritance of corruption from Adam, and lays it down on that mercy-seat. He confesses his own personal sins, in their various forms, aspects, aggravations; the sins of his life and lips, as far as memory can remember, and lays them down upon the sprinkled blood. He calls to mind his sins as a member of society; sins in the relations of life—sins against the Church of God, sins as one of a guilty nation, sins as a man belonging to a world lying in wickedness. And as he feels and deplores all, he lays down his innumerable sins on the mercy-seat. He tries to look in, and bring out the sins of his heart— sins of thought, feeling, affection, desire, hope. His hardness of heart, his blindness, above all, self, in its ten thousand times ten thousand forms, all are laid upon the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat. His unbelief—the grace of God, as well as His law, despised, slighted, undervalued, set aside, times without number—unbelief, even since he knew the Lord, caused by the deceitfulness of sin, by earthly

care, by passing pleasure, by Satan's wiles, by a too pliable or too fearful soul—this, too, is brought out, confessed, and laid upon the blood. Yet more: the sin of his holy things is laid there too; for the very act of confession has its sin, there is some blemish in the very act of faith; there is a film in the eye that looks to the atoning Savior. Who can understand his errors? Oh, who can declare his own heart's utter sinfulness! At length it is done. But what does it discover? He has laid down his whole soul there—his very self; but in all this there has been nothing but sin for him to leave there! No holiness is laid down on that blood, for it is from all sin that the blood cleanses.

You come, therefore, wholly as a sinner. Nothing can be more deeply solemnizing than this. To have such a burden to lay down there—to have nothing else than a burden of this kind, and to lay all this on the Lord Jesus Christ! How humbling, how fitted to lay the sinner in the dust, is the view this gives of his utter guilt and vileness! And yet nothing is more inviting, for it is with sin he comes, and as a sinner; and the Lord Jesus meets the sin and the sinner. Is there, then, any room for delay? any ground for excuse for hesitating to come at once?

Reader! Have you ever laid to heart that this is the truth, as to the state in which a sinner comes to the mercy-seat for pardon? Is it true that the greatness of your sins need be no hindrance to your acceptance, if only you are now willing, with all your heart, to turn from sin to God? Yes; it is true. It was for sinners, the mercy-seat was made. It was for sinners the blood was shed. "This is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins," (Matthew 26:28). "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick . . . I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," (Matthew 9:12-13).

When, at any time, you have heard Christ in all His fullness pressed upon your acceptance—when you have been invited, without delay, to draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith—is it not true that secretly you may have been raising some such difficulty as this. "Oh, but I am such a sinner—I cannot expect to be received just as I am. I must wait till I have mended my life, and then I will come. I must wait till I have prayed longer, and then I will come. I must wait till I have had deeper convictions of sin, and then I may hope that the Lord will receive me if I come" Is this your view of the way of salvation? If it be, you are surely all in the wrong. Is it not just as if you were to say, "I cannot go to God just now, for I am a poor, vile, guilty sinner, with no good thing about me at all—a poor beggar, who has nothing to give for salvation. But I shall wait till I have something to recommend me, and then I shall go." Dear reader, would this be a free salvation? You want to pay for salvation; but God offers you salvation without money and without price. "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price," (Isaiah 55:1). "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," (Revelation 22:17).

But, moreover, supposing it had been required that you should bring some good thing with you when you came to the mercy-seat, how vain would have been your hopes? He, who for a moment, cherishes such a thought has evidently never been brought to feel the total and utter depravity of his nature—that in him, that is, in his flesh, dwelleth no good thing, (Romans 7:18). When a sinner is once truly awakened by the Spirit of God to see the awful ruin of his condition, he then feels that, so far from its being a comfort to him, the very thing that is the likeliest to drive him to despair would be to tell him that he must wait till he find some good thing in him to recommend him before he could hope for pardon from an angry God. The Lord shows us a more excellent way. Glorious

truth! spoken of Jesus by those who were stumbled by its very glory— “This man receiveth sinners,” (Luke 15:2). In the Gospel-call, so far as any ground of acceptance is concerned, the Lord has no respect to the sinner’s state at all, as to whether it be better? or whether it be worse. The only question is, Art thou willing? The invitation is, “Whosoever will.”

(2) The sinner who comes in faith to the mercy-seat is immediately received. The priest who thus confessed and spread out his sin, found God at that spot where the seven-times sprinkled blood lay, waiting to be gracious. There never was seen the flash of angry lightning over the mercy-seat. There never was heard one faint murmur of Sinai-thunder there. There was, on the contrary, the bright and glorious cloud that cast its mild rays, sweeter than ever did setting sun, over the sinner who had on that spot spoken out his soul’s guilt, and left it on the blood.

God looked on the atoning blood, and pointing to it, seemed to say, “I am well pleased therein; and therefore, spare this sinner.” He saw His justice satisfied, because fully met by that setting forth of death for the guilty. Bending over it, it was as if He bent over His beloved Son, in whom He is ever well pleased. The sinner, too, fixed his eye on the same atonement that lay on that mercy-seat; and after having so confessed his sinfulness, stood gazing on the blood, as if to say, “Lord, there is my death for each sin; there is my satisfaction; there is my propitiation; there is Thy law’s demand; I do not seek aught inconsistent with Thy perfect righteousness!” And this is the position of a believing soul. His eye is on Jesus. His ear hears the testimony, that because of the blood, God has given us eternal life, (1 John 5:11). His soul says, “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to me.” He is told, “Him hath God set forth to be a propitiation,” (Romans 3:25), and he believes it, and holds it up to God. God owns it as enough, and is at peace with him.

Reader! have you ever laid to heart that this is the truth concerning the blood of Christ—that there is immediate pardon for every sinner believing in it, and resting upon it? The broken law proclaims that the wages of sin is death. The sinner’s hope is not a hope procured upon any other terms. If it were so, where. or when for a moment, would the sinner be safe? It would be but a saying, “Peace, peace,” while the law said there was no peace. No. Salvation is not an unrighteous compromise between the law and the Gospel. The law’s terms to the sinner are, “The wages of sin is death.” And the law’s terms to the sinner’s Surety are, “The wages of sin is death.” God does not take the believer’s five talents for the hundred which he owed, and call them a hundred, in order that his saving love might reach him. But for the hundred talents which he owed, Christ has paid a hundred—paid the uttermost farthing. The law required perfect obedience, and blood. Christ, as the sinner’s Surety, has rendered perfect obedience, and blood.

“Do we, then, make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law,” (Romans 3:31). There is nothing in all the universe which so proclaims God’s holy wrath against sin, as that blood of Christ, which is the only meeting-place between an unholy sinner and a holy God. The law proclaims that the wages of sin is death; the Gospel proclaims, through that blood not only that wages of sin is, but has been, death. That blood tells every one that believeth, not only that the wages of his sin is death, but that the wages has been paid, and that now the bitterness of that death is past. Reader! see in that blood that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so now grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord, (Romans 5:21).

Here is peace for the guilty, rest for the weary. Behold this blood! Behold, in what it has done in all generations, the power of that blood to bring far off sinners nigh! Behold that mercy-seat, where

the precious atonement-blood is sprinkled? There God is waiting to be gracious—waiting to meet you! There, and there only, the Holy One can meet with the guilty, and be reconciled. There is salvation to the uttermost, to all who will draw near. That blood offers immediate forgiveness. It is the plea which God Himself, with whom we have to do, has furnished to the perishing sinner. Will He not accept His own plea?— “the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by Him who do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead and gave Him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God,” (1 Peter 1:21). Will He not recognize the preciousness and power of the blood of His beloved Son, when it is held up in faith by the believing soul? (Read 1 John 1:7; Colossians 1:12-15; Ephesians 2:12-15; Hebrews 12:24).

(3) Is a sinner’s appeal to the blood of Jesus his only ground of acceptance? Yes, the one and only ground. The great thing that has created a difference between the soul now believing, and other souls still in sin, is that the eye of the believing one has been fixed upon the atonement. Others see not the power of the blood, and so have no plea with God.

There is nothing else on which the Holy Ghost fixes a sinner’s eye, when it is He who is guiding us to God. The world sends us to qualities in ourselves, and to efforts of our own; and Satan approves of the world’s way, as being a part of the way of death. But the Holy Ghost, who testifies of Christ, guides none to peace and salvation, but by fixing their eye on the blood alone. He never turns a sinner’s eye in on himself as a means of confidence, He never bids a sinner see his own character, and so draw encouragement. No! the Lord’s way ever has been to “glorify Christ,” in order to give confidence to a sinner. The seven-times sprinkled blood on the mercy-seat is enough to give us boldness to draw near—enough to give us full assurance. Believer! why do you live with anything less than full assurance of your acceptance? Why cast suspicion on the fullness of Christ? Why raise doubts concerning the truth of God’ s testimony? Why act as if you feared that Christ’s death and resurrection were not the sinner’s all-sufficient warrant? Why tremble, as if the Rock of Ages were giving way? And yet, how many, even among the people of God, live as if they believed that a sinner might find hope in resting his soul upon the blood of Christ, but that assurance of salvation were not to be looked for till after many days. Does it not seem as if it were not till something they fancy they can do, or be, or suffer, or attain to, is reached, that they think they can presume to look for a joyful assurance of salvation? Are not souls often met with, inquiring the way of salvation, and perhaps, evidencing their sincerity with many tears, who say that as yet they have no comfort, but that they are trying all they can, and they hope soon to attain to it. May there not in all this be a looking, perhaps an unconscious looking, towards something else, for present acceptance and a present joyful assurance of salvation, besides the finished work of Christ? Is it not to be feared that a dimness of perception, in this respect, is the cause of much of the darkness and bondage in which many, even of the true children of God, are held so long? Is there not in this a practical denial that Christ’s work finished for sinners, and that finished work alone, is ground sufficient to warrant a believing sinner’s present hope and full assurance of salvation? Is there not in this a confounding of the Spirit’s work in the sinner with Christ’s work for the sinner, as the ground of his acceptance with God? Does it not tend toward the Popish delusion, that it is for our work accepted for Christ’s sake, and not for Christ’s sake alone, that we are accepted? Is it not just a going about, in a more subtle form, to establish a righteousness of our own, and a refusing to submit ourselves to the righteousness of God? Is it not just the voice of

the same deceiver who said of the terms of the old covenant, “Ye shall not surely die!” now saying of the terms of the new, “Ye shall not surely live?”

Dear reader, we affectionately urge this matter upon you; for we believe it nearly concerns your own salvation—your own peace and holiness. If my warrant to be assured of salvation depended upon the measure of my attainments, how could I ever be assured of salvation? How could I ever be assured that I had attained such a measure as would secure my acceptance, and my deliverance from the hand of my enemies, that I might serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of my life? How could the jailer have been safe in rejoicing in Christ, the same hour of the night? How could the eunuch have been warranted in going on his way rejoicing?

But, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord.” Blessed be God, it is not a peradventure, left in uncertainty until after death or judgment, on which I am pleaded with to rest my eternal all. It is a work devised for sinners, undertaken for sinners, wrought out for sinners, finished for sinners, and accepted by God for sinners, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead. And we have not to go to the uttermost parts of the earth to seek it. O reader! that finished work, that immediate acceptance and salvation, is nigh thee—in thy hand—in thy mouth—in thy heart! “Hearken unto Me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness; behold! I bring near My righteousness!,” (Isaiah 46:12-13). “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,” (Acts 16:31). But is there, then, no hope that we are in Christ unless we possess this full assurance? We do not say so, though we believe that this question has often been used as a refuge from the guilt of not resting with full confidence on the blood of Christ. By reason of the weakness of their faith, and the strength of corruption within, the holiest of men are often found walking in darkness; but what we plead for is this, that if a child of God be not kept in peace as regards his acceptance, it is not for the want of something in Christ, but because of his own want of faith, to take freely what has been so freely given; and that all such doubts and fears regarding the fullness of Christ—whatever be the humbled and exercised look they may assume—while they are the believer’s misery, are no less truly the believer’s sin. And this is the true way of holiness. The same apostle who proclaims salvation “to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly,” beseeches us, by those very mercies of God, to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. The same sprinkled blood which speaks peace to the sinner, proclaims to that sinner continually, “Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s,” (1 Corinthians 6:20).

How precious, then, this way of acceptance! We need no more than this, for immediate and present pardon. The crucified and risen Jesus, and nothing else, brings us nigh to God. The crucified and risen Jesus, apart from all besides, reconciles us to God. The crucified and risen Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. He has borne an awful testimony that the wages of sin is death, and has thus opened the way of salvation for the very chief of sinners, the very basest and vilest of men.

Reader! have you ever felt this blood of Christ to be precious blood? Have you been convinced of sin, and convinced of righteousness? Have you ever felt God’s holy justice in requiring such a sacrifice, and His holy love in providing it, not sparing His only begotten Son? Have you ever felt

the necessity for that blood being shed, and sprinkled upon your soul before you could be pardoned? It is the blood, and the blood alone, which maketh atonement for the soul. It was to this blood of Christ, seen by faith through the types of the ceremonial law, that David was looking in the Fifty-first Psalm, when, in bitterness for his guilt, he cried, Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow," (Psalms 51:7). Has the insupportable burden of sin ever thus fixed your eye upon that blood whence alone pardon and relief can come? Or are you yet easy-minded about the state of your soul? Does your conscience tell you that it would make no material difference to you, if you were to be told that now there was to be no longer any access to the mercy-seat for you? Dear reader, think what you are doing. Is sin a fancy? Is the wrath of God a vain imagination? If these were matters of little consequence, if they were as small matters as you now think them, would God have given His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life?

You do not deny that you are a sinner—by nature "dead in trespasses and sins," a child of wrath, even as others, (Ephesians 2:1, Ephesians 2:3). How, then, do you expect to be saved? Are you not neglecting the great and the only salvation? How shall you escape? (Hebrews 2:3). He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace," (Hebrews 10:28-29)? The blood was always upon the mercy-seat. It was there, night and day, summer and winter, year after year. So Jesus is. He is never unable or unwilling to receive one coming sinner. Do you ask, Who are they who would be welcome? He answers, "Him that cometh," (John 6:37). Every sinner, of every kind and character. Great and small, young and old, are welcome. Nicodemus came to Jesus by night—and he was welcome. The woman that feared to be seen touched Him—and was cured. All the publicans and sinners drew near to Him—and He stood in the midst. "Him that cometh," said He, "I will in no wise cast out." And who must come? All that would not perish for ever. For, "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," (Acts 4:12). No other mercy-seat, no other throne of grace, no other key to open the door, no other way into the Holiest, no other plea that the Advocate will use at the great assize, no other advocate, no other propitiation held forth by God, no other cord of mercy flung out, in view of that wide, endless eternity.

"Having, therefore, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water," (Hebrews 10:19-22). Seek ye the Lord, while He may be found. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool," (Isaiah 1:18).

And, O reader, there is no other time but "Now."

S. Nicodemus

Nicodemus.

John 3:1-21 ; John 7:50; John 19:39 We have three scenes given us in the life of Nicodemus. The first is his interview with Christ. How he was awakened we do not know. It is of no consequence when and how it is done, if it is the beginning of the great change. You say, 'I cannot go one step towards Christ till I am born again and feel it.' That is a great mistake, for although the Bible says you must be born again, it nowhere says that you must feel that you are born again. But Jesus further said, 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.' It is by looking to Christ that new life comes in. 'For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Did you ever think that these wondrous words, the most magnificent the world has ever heard, were all spoken to one man, in a quiet room? If we were asked to whom was Christ likely to say them, we should conjecture that He would gather together all the angels to teach them another new song. But they were not spoken to angels! Or we conjecture such an assembly as that at Mizpah, the Temple at Jerusalem when it was full, and before the many thousands of Israel He would say -'Hear, O Israel, God so loved the world!' But no, brethren, He sat in a quiet room in the village of in the chamber that Martha and Mary had fitted up for His use, and there, alone with Nicodemus, He spoke these never-to-be-forgotten words, which have been more used than any others in the Bible. He did not grudge to say His best things to the poor hungering soul beside Him. He did not grudge to lift His golden vessel filled with living water to the lips of this Pharisee. Is it not good news for you and me? Take them all to yourself; empty if you can that vessel into your own soul. You are welcome to all it contains. The words sank into the soul of Nicodemus as he went away. I can suppose with what solemn feelings he bade the Master farewell, and walked over the shoulder of the Mount of Olives in the calm still moonlight, thinking deeply on all he had heard. In the second scene we can see Nicodemus going about his ordinary business, for a man does not need to leave his work to follow Christ. He must take Christ with him; and religion does not make a man selfish. It rather makes him want to give away all he can.

I can imagine Nicodemus next day, observing Christ walking with His disciples, going forward and saying to John, 'I was with your Master last night.'

'I thought so,' said John. 'We heard some rumour of it at Bethany this morning.'

'I heard him say strange things. Does He ever say such things to any one else? Did you ever hear Him say that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son?' At once John treasured up the words, and when he was writing his Gospel the Holy Ghost said to him, 'Take care, John, that you do not forget these words.' See how joy flows from one heart to another. Nicodemus having received the love of God was the means of communicating it to others.

It was the great day of the feast. The Sanhedrin or Seventy Elders, seeing the crowds and Jesus speaking to them, ordered officers to go and fetch Him into their presence. Nicodemus was

present but did not interfere. He thought it would be another famous opportunity of hearing Him. By and by the door opened■the officers entered with awe-struck faces, but without Christ, exclaiming, 'Never man spake like this Man.'

'Are ye also deceived? Have any of the Rulers or the Pharisees believed on Him?' And they went on to curse the crowd who listened and the One who taught. Then Nicodemus could not be silent any longer. He burned to speak for the Master he loved. Rising up calmly he said, 'Does our law judge any man before it hear him and know what he doeth?' And as he looked around fearlessly, prepared to defend Christ, he was met with a storm of sneers and contempt. 'Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet!' Thus, like men in a passion, they made a blunder historically.

I have a strong conviction that this was the hour of the conversion of Joseph of Arimathea. I can suppose Joseph touching Nicodemus and saying, 'I would like to speak with you about this Jesus of Nazareth. Come home with me and tell me more about Him.' And so I would say that it is a good thing sometimes to be laughed at. Young followers of the Lamb■take encouragement from this, and remember that a little touch of persecution will do you no harm. In the third scene we find Nicodemus at the Cross. He came out of his hiding-place. He could not bear that his Master should hang on a Cross. When Jesus was condemned Nicodemus was not present in the Council. He was journeying, perhaps. But see how he has been growing. Compare his first coming to Christ with this his last. Then full of fear, now bold and courageous. I am not sure that Joseph did not call on him, on his coming back to Jerusalem, on the day of the Crucifixion, to say, 'I have a new tomb where I would fain bury our Master. Will you help me?' Nicodemus had evidently intended something of the kind, for he had brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight.

Look at the scene. As the two good men stood by the Cross, what would pass through the mind of Nicodemus? Would it not be this: 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.'

How reverently and lovingly they two handle that body! What a funeral! only two mourners, but many spectators, for all the angels in heaven were looking on. It was the burial of the King of kings. Dr. Mason of New York was once at the funeral of a young man, and he thought the pall■bearers were going a little too fast. He went forward, and touching them softly, he said, 'Walk softly; you are carrying a temple of the Holy Ghost.' If that could be said of a follower of Christ, what of the blessed Master Himself?

Nicodemus is hazarding his life as well as his reputation. He is lavishing his wealth on Christ. Christ's dying love has filled his heart. He counts it an honour to roll the stone to the sepulchre-door, as the angel did to roll it back.

Learn like Nicodemus to confess a Christ that died.

Men preach the imitation of Christ, but it is the death of Christ that brings life to the soul. Woe to the sinner who tries to get to heaven by simply imitating Christ. We must die, be crucified with Christ, and then we shall rise with Him to life eternal.

Chapter 122

S. Onesiphorus: The New Testament Ebedmelech

Onesiphorus: The New Testament Ebedmelech.

2 Timothy 1:16-18 and 2 Timothy 4:19

Paul had a heart that felt everything keenly. It is from his pen that 'Rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep' comes. It is he who wrote in Php 4:8 : 'the bowels of Christ Jesus.' Many times he speaks in this way, 'desiring greatly to see thee.' No wonder, then, that he so felt the kindness of Onesiphorus, and has recorded it all. This name means 'one who brings profit,' not unlike 'Onesimus,' perhaps given by his parents with the hope, 'may he prove a helper to many!' He lived at Ephesus, but business took him away at times from his family to Rome. Perhaps he was converted during the revival at Ephesus, (Acts 19:1-20). He was :

I. A helper of Paul, though not a preacher.■He did not leave his profession after his conversion, but he and his 'household' confessed Christ in their place. He 'refreshed' Paul often, by kind deeds and words, and brotherly intercourse, and prayed with him. He cheered him when he felt (as he sometimes did), like 2 Corinthians 2:13, 'no rest in his spirit,' etc. He paid him little attentions, sent some of his family to run messages for him, or to take him little comforts. Also he 'ministered' to him■the very office of the women in Luke 8:3■giving him of his substance. All this is recorded because of Hebrews 6:10.

II. A visitor of Paul in prison.■ He was not ashamed of my chain. Now that passage, in Matthew 25:36-43, tells of times of trial and temptation to friends to shun the risk of helping the prisoners. But this man won the prize which Christ speaks of. Simon of Cyrene may have done what he did willingly, but at any rate Onesiphorus did, for 'he sought me out diligently, and was not ashamed of my chain.' Paul had been thrust into a Roman prison-cell among many scores of criminals, himself branded as the worst because he was a 'Christian,' one of those whom the Emperor had stigmatised as burners of Rome! Yet this faithful friend lets it be known that he is Paul's friend, finds his way into his cell■sits down and converses with him■bears reproach for him. By this sympathy so practical he proclaims, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.' Our deeds tell where our heart is; and is it not deeds rather than words that Christ judges by in Matthew 25:36, Matthew 25:43?

III. Paul's prayer for him and his.■Paul does not narrate the story in his usual style, but in a curiously abrupt way bursts into a fervent prayer for Onesiphorus. 'The Lord have mercy on his household, may he himself find mercy in that day.' Does this contain much? Yes, everything. If once the barrier to the outflow of mercy be removed, everything good and heavenly may come in. 'Have mercy on me' has a very wide meaning in the Psalms. But specially observe it is 'in that day' ■the day of Christ, the day of recompenses, just as in Jude 1:21 'mercy unto eternal life' is at Christ's appearing to bring the full store of blessing. This is a case like Ebedmelech's in Jeremiah 38:1-28. Remember how the Lord took notice of that Ethiopian having shown himself not ashamed of God's servant (Jeremiah 39:16-18). In the fact that Paul specifies the 'household' we may read

that they were very dear to Onesiphorus, and were possibly left at home without him at the time Timothy was to carry the message (4:19), and tell of this prayer. Parents, see how the Lord feels for your children!

Now let us look back and glean a few lessons.

1. See how one saint may help another.■Even one who has no gift of utterance may help a great Apostle. Brotherly love expressed in any form has wonderful effects■a look, a word, a prayer, a taking part by sympathy and acknowledgment.

2. Learn not to wait till others come forward.■Work yourself and let others follow. On this occasion 'no man stood by' Paul, but all the more was the noble conduct of Onesiphorus felt. So in common work for Christ. 'I go a fishing' (John 21:3). This is your part ; and let others seeing you, follow. 'We also go with you.'

3. Do much for saints.■ Refresh them, 'minister to' them, 'do good unto all men (Galatians 6:10), especially unto them who are of the household of faith. Remember the Master's words (Matthew 10:40, Matthew 10:42).

Think of 'that day' spoken of here and elsewhere,■ so present always to Paul's mind that he does not specify it. Has your faith led you to love that day? Are you of those who love His appearing? Do you do all as under the light of that day? 'That day' begins eternity, and our day of grace now decides our state 'in that day.' Will you 'find mercy in that day'? Have you already 'in this your day' found mercy at the mercy-seat through the blood of atonement?

S. Palestine for the Young - The Tribe of Levi

Palestine for the Young - The Tribe of Levi The prophecy of Jacob regarding Levi was remarkably fulfilled : "I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel" (Genesis 49:7). You have to search for their dwellings in every corner of the land. They were scattered and divided over all Israel; for they got forty-eight cities, taken out of all the other tribes, to dwell in, not to possess. They did not rule these cities, nor were they theirs in the same sense as cities belonged to others; they had them only as habitations, with an assigned portion of the neighbouring fields around the cities for their flocks and cattle. We read the list of these cities at full length in 1 Chronicles 6:54-81, and more generally in Joshua 21:1-45. "These are their dwelling places," says the writer of the Chronicles; and then he adds, "throughout their castles." It should be, "at their inclosures," for the word has nothing in it to suggest greatness, far less baronial mansions, such as studded our country in old days. The Levites had nothing in common with the abbots and other dignitaries of the church of Rome. The Levites were simple men of God, assuming no prerogatives, and living really in the service of God. The word for "castles" is properly "inclosures," and speaks of localities marked off for their use. Probably there would be squares of building, or villages, occupied by them, and some of the cities were wholly peopled by their families.

It is very pleasant to look upon these quiet resting-places whereby provision was made to keep up spiritual light and life throughout all the coasts of Israel. It was the Lord’s appointment and arrangement.

Judah gave Hebron (where the men of Levi might often recall Caleb and learn to "follow the Lord fully ") a City of Refuge; Libnah, also Jattir, Eshtemoa, Hilen, Ashan, Debir, the city for which Achsah won by petition the upper and nether springs, so teaching us to pray to our heavenly Father; Beth-shemesh also and Jutta, where some say that Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, resided.

Benjamin gave up Geba, Alemoth, Anathoth, where Jeremiah wept and prayed, and Gibeon, ever to be remembered for the Lord hearkening so to the voice of a man. The tribe of Dan provided Ajalon, the spot over which the moon stayed its course when Joshua prayed; Eltekeh also, and Gibbethon. From Ephraim they got Shechem, a City of Refuge, where too was Joshua’s Oak of Witness when he adjured Israel to cleave to the Lord, and when Levi might remember their father’s sin that had so scattered them (Genesis 34:1-31.); Gezer, Jokmeam (" the gathering of the people," called also Kibzaiin, "the two heaps"), Bethhoron, and Aijalon. The half-tribe of Manasseh gave Gathrimmon, Aner, Bileam, and Taanach, fraught with its memories of Deborah and Barak.

Issachar furnished Kedesh, or Kishion, Daberath, Ramoth, or Jarmuth, Anem, the same as En-gannim, the city of gardens, in the plain of Jezreel.

Asher gave up Mashal (" the weighty saying" is its meaning), Abdon (" service" is its meaning), Hukkok, and Rehob.

Naphtali gave Kedesh, the City of Refuge in Mount Naphtali, with all its interesting associations and scenery; Hammon, where warm baths were found, and Kirjathaim, or Kartan. From Zebulon they got Rimmon, and Nahallal-Tabor, a town near the famous Mount Tabor; so that under its shadow their cattle and flocks pastured, and themselves meditated and taught.

Beyond Jordan, the half-tribe of Manasseh supplied another City of Refuge for Levi to garrison (so to speak), Golan; and also Ashtaroth, once dedicated so specially to the goddess Astarte, but now to be wholly the Lord's city.

Gad furnished Ramoth-Gilead, the City of Refuge, Mahanaim, so fragrant with the memory of Jacob's convoy of angels, afterwards with David's sorrows and joys, Heshbon, so full of the past history of Israel's first coming into the land, and Jazer.

Last of all, Reuben furnished Bezer, the sixth City of Refuge, to be kept open by Levi, and Jahzah, where Sihon perished; Kedemoth also, and Mephaath.

Thus God turned Levi's curse into a blessing to all Israel; for thus they were dispersed, in terms of the threatening, and yet made instruments of good, teaching and living for God all over the land. A network of Levitical influence was spread over both sides of Jordan, from Dan to Beersheba, from Hermon to the river Arnon. Every district had some among them whose presence and words told of Jehovah's temple, and of the sacrifices of atonement which it was their duty and privilege to commend to all the people. Thus was borne a living testimony everywhere through the land to the value, importance, and necessity of the typical institution, God's special "statutes." The curse was turned into a blessing to themselves also; for theirs was the high privilege of handling holy things more than other men. "The sacrifices of the Lord were their inheritance" not only in the common way of being part of their subsistence but in the far higher sense, as understood by the spiritual among them, of having Jehovah, who revealed himself in the sacrifices, as their soul's portion and joy.

Here is the blessing pronounced on them by Moses (Deuteronomy 33:8-11): "Let thy Urim and thy Thummim be with thy Holy One." The breastplate, like the ark of the covenant, had the Law within its folds, and this Law, "the Urim and Thummim," light and perfection in very deed. Jacob says to Levi; "Let the breastplate worn by the priest of thy tribe be committed by thee to the keeping of the Holy One - that Holy One whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah." Remember thy failure there: thine is but a typical priesthood and service; look up to thy Holy One as the true Priest. He then goes on, appealing at one time to Levi, at another to the Lord. "Ever remember, O Levi, that day in thy history which was the turning-point to thee; the day when the Lord reversed the curse and gave thee the blessing; the day when at the foot of Horeb, thou didst take the Lord's side" (Exodus 32:26). Lord, this is he who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen them, neither did acknowledge brethren, nor know his own children; for they have observed thy words and kept thy covenant.

Let them teach Jacob thy judgments and Israel thy law!

Let them put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice on thine altar.

Bless, Lord, his substance, and accept the work of his hands;

Smite through the loins of them that rise up against him, And of them that hate him, that they rise not again !"

If such the blessing of the typical priestly ones, what may be said of the true priest and Levite that fulfils all, Jesus! He is our Prophet to teach us how the Father is pleased with us in him; he puts before God the sweet incense of his merit, and the great sacrifice of his suffering unto death. The Lord accepts the work of his hands, all his obedience, and all that he undertook. Whoever rejects or resists him must perish, never to rise again. Happy they who are one with this Priest and Minister of the true Tabernacle! In the very highest sense "the Lord is their inheritance."

Chapter 124

S. Paul's fifteen days' visit to Peter.

Paul’s fifteen days’ visit to Peter.

’Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.’

Galatians 1:18 For three years after his conversion Paul was out of sight in Arabia. The Lord sent him there, as He sent Moses to Midian, to be trained for after work. It was an education time. He would, no doubt, visit Sinai (see Galatians 4:25), and on the top of that hill get new thoughts about the Law. He would visit Elijah’s cave, and think of the ’still, small voice’ that was to work greater things than fire, or wind, or earthquake. No doubt, too, he received there teaching in the Gospel and the ordinances, for (1 Corinthians 11:23) ’I received from the Lord,’ parelabon apo tou Kurion. We see plainly the Lord looking forward to evils that would arise in His Church as to the Supper, and, therefore, re-instituting that ordinance with careful simplicity. ’This do,’ and no more ■no appendage■no preface. Was it in Elijah’s cave? and there did Paul hear Jesus say, ’as often as ye eat this bread . . . ye do shew the Lord’s death, till He come.’ But we are hastening to Jerusalem after these three years. When it was noised abroad among the disciples, ’Paul has come!’ how great would be the interest. He goes to the upper room and worships, perhaps preaches, and then goes home with Peter. ’To see Peter’ (historesias Kephan, Galatians 1:18) is to make acquaintance and ascertain by inquiry. What an interesting sight it must have been■Paul listening to Peter, and Peter listening to Paul. We may learn from this incident

I. A disciples brotherly love to other disciples.■Paul goes to his own company. He does not care to visit Gamaliel, his old teacher, or any of his fellow-students. He seeks fellowship, and so goes to Peter, to talk over the past, and to learn more specially about the simple Gospel-message. They spent fifteen days together; on one of these James (not the Apostle) called; they heard each other preach; and Paul found, as he tells us in this epistle, that they entirely agreed in all their views of the truth■salvation without works or ceremonies■ salvation by the Son of God, and His one offering and sacrifice■and more than ever they resolved to preach ’none other name.’ They go out to walk together. What would Paul’s feelings be as they came to where Stephen was stoned! O to have heard him speak of God’s sovereign grace! ’The grace of our God was exceeding abundant.’ ’I, who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor and injurious.’ ’That in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern,’ etc. Peter would point out the spot where he ’went out and wept bitterly.’ How much there was there to humble him■that God should so use him who said, ’I know not the Man.’ Such visits and reviews are most helpful and humbling. There might be in the history of each of God’s people a Book of Deuteronomy, going over again the wilderness journey.

II. A disciple’s love to the Master.■Why does he go to Peter and not to John? The Master had said to Peter, ’When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren,’ and Paul went to get some of the strength. Then Christ had said again, ’I give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.’ God gave to Paul and Barnabas, too, the keys to ’open the door of faith to the Gentiles’ (Acts 14:27). See these two upon the house-top, in the moonlight, turning toward Gethsemane, and Peter tells

Paul of the 'strong crying and tears.' See them next day go forth. 'Here is where Jesus raised Lazarus!' and 'Here is where He wept over the city.' And now, this is Calvary, the Great Altar! How long they linger there! and I would like to know what they said there to one another. Paul would ask Peter about Christ: 'What was His look? Is it true He never smiled? What were your feelings when you and John looked into the sepulchre? And Peter would take him to the spot where Christ. ascended after saying, 'Go ye into all the world.' Then he would ask Paul to tell him what he saw of Christ on the day he was converted near Damascus. How their hearts would burn! Anything about the Master is fuel to a disciple's love.

III. A disciple's humility.■Paul was a cleverer man, and far more of a scholar than Peter. He had very much he could tell, but he wished to learn, for what is a disciple if not one who so learns? Paul had been to Sinai, but he had been further than Sinai■he had been to the Third Heavens. Still, he can learn from fellow-disciples. If you are a true disciple, you are always learning. Every disciple you meet with has something for you if you could only get it. One disciple is the eye; he sees a great deal into the truth. Another is the hand; he does a great deal for God. Another is the foot, quick to run messages for the Master. But the eye has no right to say to the hand, 'I have no need of you.' We are wrong if we are not trying to draw out of others what God has given them. Try this; it knits us to one another. Paul says, when he is coming to see the Roman Christians, his desire is to get something from them, 'That I may with you be refreshed '(Romans 15:32); 'Comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me' (Romans 1:12). So Peter says also, 'Like precious faith with us,' (2 Peter 1:1). Never think you can be of no use to another disciple. God does not give everything to one. Aquila and Priscilla could do a great deal even for Apollos.

IV. A disclple's anxiety to know exactly the will of God.■For the context in Galatians lets us know that it was mainly in order to this that he came to see Peter ■to be sure he was not misrepresenting the Gospel. He tells us that 'he added nothing' on that point (Galatians 2:6), nor did friends who came to his house; and so he went away, more than ever rejoicing to proclaim the glad tidings to Jew and Gentile. For fifteen days these two good men thus talked and searched the Scriptures together. How they would pray before separating■perhaps going together up the Bethany road, and parting at the farewell spot where Christ ascended! Let us ask the same Saviour to send us the same blessing■looking up to the Right Hand and asking 'gifts for men !'

S. Pentecost

Pentecost.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS GIVEN AT THE GLASGOW CHRISTIAN CONVENTION, 1880. The subject is the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, the fiftieth day after the Passover. It might be interesting and profitable at another time to take up the question, 'In what did the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament saints differ from His work in the hearts of New Testament saints?' Sometimes the words used might seem to imply that the work in the New Testament saints was so great as to cause His work in the saints of Old Testament times to fall into the shade. 'The Holy Ghost was not yet given,' says one passage (John 7:39), 'because Jesus was not yet glorified,' as if there had been, so to speak, scarcely anything worth mentioning in regard to the working of the Spirit in former days. But let us remember that this is said because the Holy Spirit wished to impress upon us the fulness of the blessing that came after Jesus was glorified. It is like the passage in Romans 8:23, where it is said that we, the adopted sons of God, are groaning in ourselves for 'the adoption' - that is, the full adoption, on the resurrection morning. We are already adopted, but have not yet received all that is implied in that adoption. Similarly, the Holy Spirit was in Old Testament believers, but was not given in His fulness; His anointing was given to the saints of the Old Testament, but not in the same measure as in the New Testament.

There is another subject that might have engaged our attention. Every one of us who is a believer has the Holy Spirit dwelling at this moment in his heart; and He will abide there for ever. And a question is sometimes raised in connection with this - viz., Is it right to pray for His outpouring, since He is already in the Church? As to this question we reply: Every unconverted soul is a soul into which in the hour of conversion the Holy Spirit must enter, or in other words, on which He must be poured, for that soul is dry ground that needs the shower. We have Bible authority for asking the Spirit in these terms. In reference to the latter days the prophet Isaiah, says, 'I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring' (Isaiah 44:3). Zechariah also, in Zechariah 12:10, 'I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications.' But now, passing from these points, let us come to the Day of Pentecost. Let us read Acts 2:1-4. Let me ask you to visit two localities in Jerusalem - Mount Moriah and Mount Zion. We go to Moriah, the Temple Mount, on the day called Pentecost, the fiftieth day after the Passover, and what do we find that morning as we enter the temple courts? Everywhere around us are spread out the firstfruits of the completed harvest. You might almost think the spies had just arrived from the brook Eshcol. See such delicious clusters of grapes and pomegranates, see such figs, and olives, and all manner of other fruits and flowers in abundance, carried in by worshippers at sunrise that morning, and piled up in the courts of the temple. These are the firstfruits of the completed harvest, brought on that day into the courts of God's house, a gift to Him; and there is nothing here like Cain's offering; for first of all there has been poured out the blood of sacrifice, not only the morning lamb, but seven lambs, in addition two bullocks, one ram, one kid of the goats. The blood has been poured out as a declaration that all we receive is through atoning blood. And now, look well here at the firstfruits. There was (I may say) a type, a

figure in all these firstfruits. As you look on these varied fruits you may call up to your mind the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, goodness, longsuffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance, brotherly-kindness, godliness, knowledge, charity - and other such heavenly graces, represented in these courts by the firstfruits. Let us, however, pass from that scene, and visit Mount Zion. We have yonder, on Mount Zion - I do not here take time to show reasons for believing that the 120 disciples met in the old upper room where the Master so often met them. I cannot believe they would be found anywhere else, when waiting for the promise of the Father. It was a large 'upper room' (Luke 22:12), and if at the time they did not see the reason why so large an apartment was fixed upon, now it became plain why the Master had said 'a large room.' They were to meet there after He was departed, in larger companies, than when He was with them. You know how they continued meeting there for prayer during the ten days. They had got the promise of the Spirit, but promise does not supersede prayer; it stimulates prayer during the ten days. They had continued praying these ten days. No doubt that season would pass very quickly. In the life of the missionary, David Brainerd, it is beautifully told of his congregation, on one occasion, when he informed them that he must leave them that afternoon of the Sabbath, to go to a distant station, but wished they would assemble and continue in prayer the rest of the day; they agreed, and beginning in the afternoon, one prayed, and then another - in short, the spirit of prayer was given them to such a degree that the time passed very quickly, so that, till a person entered and told them that the morning star was up in the sky, they never thought of the lapse of time. It would be even thus, no doubt, in that upper room, as the 120 disciples prayed these ten days for the promise of the Father. But now the tenth morning had come, and it was the well-known Pentecost, the fiftieth day. I rather think they may have been expecting something extraordinary to happen. They had begun to get a new insight into Scripture, as you see by Peter's words in the first chapter of Acts. They have been led to expect the close of their waiting, intimated by the close of the harvest. At any rate, there they were met that morning with one accord. It was a full meeting, no Thomas was absent; and whether they were expecting something extraordinary on that particular day or not, they were met with one accord. We may imagine them - can you not, Christian friends, imagine them - intently looking up to the risen Saviour and calling on Him now, at last, to send the promised Spirit. Look at the 120 on their knees, and oh, listen to their earnest cry! Once, in the year 1519, at Leipzig, there was a large meeting of Protestants. There were to be some matters discussed of vital moment, but it was proposed they should first of all have a diet of prayer. It was agreed upon, and the great assembly resolved that they would not move a step, till they sought the presence of the Holy Spirit. They dropped on their knees and together sang a hymn, the well-known hymn, beginning, 'Veni Creator Spiritus.'

'Creator Spirit! by whose aid The world's foundation first was laid, The source of uncreated light, The Father's promised Paraclete.

Thrice holy fount, thrice holy fire, Our hearts with heavenly love inspire;

Come, and thy sacred unction bring To sanctify us while we sing.

Plenteous of grace, descend from high Rich in Thy sevenfold energy;

Make us eternal truths receive, And practise all that we believe;

Give us Thyself,that we may see The Father and the Son by Thee.' When they had finished the last verse, all still kneeling on the floor, with one accord they began to sing again, 'Creator Spirit,' etc., and when they had finished a second time, all felt as if they could not yet rise from their knees, but a third time sang the same hymn, the whole assembly filled with longing for the mighty working of the Spirit. It must have been a scene like this which was witnessed on the day of Pentecost. As the rising sun cast his bright beams on that upper room on Mount Zion, while the disciples were again calling on their risen and ascended Lord to send 'the promise of the Father,' suddenly there was heard a sound from heaven. 'Suddenly,' notice it, for the thing was of God, and when God works He works at once. This sound which so suddenly burst upon their ears was the presence of the Spirit - the arrival of the Comforter. He was come at last. Who can tell the feelings of the disciples when they found that the long waited for gift was now given! It is said there was a 'sound.' Peter says of the voice on the Transfiguration hill (2 Peter 1:17), it was 'such a voice!' and no doubt he would have said of what they heard this day, it was 'such a sound!' It was a sound as of a rushing mighty wind (says our translator), but not a wind in the common sense of the word, but a wind like what is mentioned in Ezekiel 37:9, 'Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' It is the word used in Genesis, 'And the Lord formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.'

There was the sound of a mighty breathing, and it was like a river rushing or pouring along. It was the river of the living breath of God. It was the pouring out of the Spirit. It was what Joel had foretold, 'I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh.' There is the pouring out of the Spirit, and that is 'on all flesh.' For, look round the room! tongues of fire are to be seen. Tongues! why tongues? Because every nation must hear the tidings of the great salvation. It is the Spirit poured out 'on all flesh. ' There is a tongue to be given that they may be messengers of the glorious Gospel to all nations. But we must hasten on to watch the results. The hour for morning prayer (the third hour) was now near, and the 120 disciples repair to the temple. They cannot keep to themselves what they have got. Some think that the multitude came together to them at their upper room building, but it is more likely that they went to the temple. At any rate, they are found surrounded by Jews of all nations under heaven, all full of amazement and bewildered with surprise. But turn from them and look at the twelve. Peter, in their name, rises up; what composed boldness there is in him; he is calm, yet full of zeal and fervour; he speaks, and nothing could be plainer than the language used. It is clear, plain, and distinct. The words used everybody can understand. But, oh, how authoritatively and surely he gives forth his testimony to Christ risen and ascended, and calls on all to hear and obey, and the great multitude are awed as he speaks. Oh! for such a day of power to us. Oh! for such a coming of the Holy Spirit to every minister, to every worker. We long for this. We look for this. And in passing, notice there is not a syllable in all Scripture that intimates that when the Spirit fills a man, he shouts. When the Spirit fills a man he is calm. Notice that. What did Christ do? No noisy shout did He send forth, He did not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the streets (Isaiah 42:2). For the Spirit comes calmly and gently, though with over whelming power, enabling the man to bear witness for the Lord. There is awe upon the spirit of the man whom the Spirit fills, and deepest reverence; for he feels Jehovah's presence with him. But look at the people to whom Peter and his fellow-apostles speak, how are they affected? As soon as Peter has given his testimony - 'This is the Lord of glory, whom you have crucified, but whom the Father honours, and who is now at the right hand,' conviction pierces their hearts. The Lord had said

(John 16:8), When the Comforter is come to you, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. This has begun to take place. The people, as Peter is speaking, are pricked in their hearts. What shall we do? they cry. They have made a discovery that He whom they crucified is the eternal Son of God, the Lord of Glory. As John Newton puts it of his own discovery of his unbelief, 'Alas, I knew not what I did, But now my tears are vain; Where shall my trembling soul be hid, For I the Lord have slain?' But forthwith the scene alters. Three thousand souls, men, women, and children, are awakened, as Peter is finishing his appeal; and when he changes his voice, and preaches glad tidings of pardon, how speedily the tidings enter their hearts. 'They gladly received his word.' How speedily the message of salvation enters in, opening the heart to hear. We have not time to dwell upon particulars, but look now at the Pentecostal firstfruits. Look at that goodly company, three thousand souls. They go away praising God. They go home to eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. Observe their brotherly-kindness, their fellowship with the apostles, their liberality and unselfishness, and other graces. And there is one specified that we are surprised at. They 'continued in prayer.' They had got what they prayed for during the ten days. Yet they are praying on! Three thousand souls is a good beginning, but it is only a beginning. They pray on, and what we hear next is, Souls were daily added to the Church of such as should be saved. And the work goes on. What do we hear after Peter's next sermon? They are still praying, and the result of that sermon is, 'five thousand men' (Acts 4:4) are added to the Church. The river of the Spirit is pouring along. What follows next? Soon after we hear that the river has risen, and has reached the temple. 'A great company of the priests are obedient to the faith.' Then we hear (Acts 6:7) that the river is flowing on still, for old Samaria receives the Word of God, and there is great joy in that city. And now comes another wonderful piece of news. The youths who sat at the feet of Gamaliel have been reached by the river. Saul of Tarsus, one of the most talented students of Jerusalem, is now sitting at the feet of Christ, and now forth he goes with all his learning, and all his talents, to proclaim Christ, throughout all the East. The river of the Spirit has been poured into his soul so abundantly, that he is able to write such words and truths as are found in Ephesians.

We might go on, but there, that is a sample of what the Spirit did when poured out from on high. May we get the same. Remember that was only the beginning. The river is flowing on still. That was only the beginning of results, but let the Lord's people remember,we must ask for the Spirit to be poured out; and there are some things we do not get when we ask only once or twice, though we ask in faith. We must ask for them often before we get them. Elijah, when bringing down the fire upon Carmel, had only to ask once, but in the afternoon, he required to pray seven times with his head between his knees, before he got abundant rains. And have you noticed that Daniel, on one occasion, set himself to pray for his city and people, and he was scarcely done with praying when Gabriel was beside him with the answer; but in the tenth chapter, he set his face to pray again, and he had to pray for twenty-one days before he got his answer. We must continue in prayer if we are to get an outpouring of the Spirit. Christ says there are some things which we shall not get, unless we pray and fast, yes, 'prayer and fasting.' We must control the flesh and abstain from whatever hinders direct fellowship with God. We must leave other things untouched, that we may give ourselves to prayer for a time. Do that often and bring down a blessing. Leave off other reading. Leave off other employments. Give up some of your work, and pray down the Spirit that we may have a great Pentecostal blessing. Our only hope is in the Holy Spirit. Eloquence will not move a man's conscience, nor will intellectual power. It is the Spirit that we need, the outpouring of

the Holy Spirit. Oh! for such days! When the Spirit has been poured out, and we stand up to preach the Word, we have scarcely spoken to the people before they are moved and melted: 'Repent, for the soul that sinneth it shall die'. As it was said in a revival in olden days, the people were like 'slaked lime,' when the preachers called on them to flee from the wrath to come; and when we tell anxious souls, 'Come unto Me,' says Christ, 'and I will give you rest,' in a moment they will rise, and go to Him. When we cry, Behold He cometh in the clouds! every eye will look towards the Coming Saviour, and rejoice in the glory to be revealed. And if the Spirit is at work, when we say to believers, this is God's message, 'Be ye holy, for I am holy,' there will follow 'the sound as of a mighty breathing,' filling the whole temple of the soul.

S. Praise

Praise Praise ye the LORD : for it is good to sing praises unto our God ; for it is pleasant ; and praise is comely.

Psalms 147:1

There are many things that might be said about praise ; but you remember the Psalms have given us three statements that may guide us. The Book of Psalms says 'Praise is PLEASANT;' it says again, 'It is GOOD to sing praise;' and again it says, 'Praise is COMELY.'

First, Praise is 'pleasant.' You know it is pleasant to yourselves; but 'praise is pleasant' means more than that. It means it is pleasant to GOD ; it is something that God is pleased with. Have you not noticed that though Solomon offered up that remarkable prayer in the Temple recorded in 2 Chronicles 6:1-42, yet the blessing did not come down then : it was not till a little after, when the multitude of singers were as one in giving forth their praise, and saying, 'The Lord is good, and His mercy endureth for ever.' The cloud of glory came down and filled the Temple as they uttered that burst of praise. And in the history of King Jehoshaphat going forth to battle against Ammon, Moab, and Seir, Jehoshaphat's remarkable prayer is recorded at full length. Still it is not then that the victory or the assurance of victory comes; but as he marched out of Jerusalem down the valley of Tekoah to where he expected to meet the enemy, they made the valley resound with songs. It is said he consulted with the people, and instead of going forth with common martial music, they agreed they would march down the valley with the Lord's song on their lips; and the burden of it is, 'For He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever.' Now, it is added, and when the song began, 'The Lord set an ambushment against Moab, and Ammon, and Seir,' and Israel did not need to fight; they just came up and gathered the spoil.

See the honour God put upon true praise rendered to Himself. Prayer must ever be followed or accompanied by praise. Prayer by itself (the Lord seems to say) is very well, but He wants praise; He must have the harp as well as the golden vial full of odour. We must now have both, as well as those that stand before the Lamb. And in the prison of Philippi what do we find? There were Paul and Silas praying. Yes, but they 'sang praises,' and the emphasis is put upon the praises. It is said the prisoners heard them, or perhaps more correctly, at least more emphatically, it is, 'And the prisoners were listening.' You can see them awaking, and expressing wonder to each other, and putting their ear to the door of their cell. The prisoners were listening ! for songs in a prison, and such songs - songs of Zion - had never been heard there before. And it was then that the earthquake shook the prison; and the Lord came down and converted the jailer, a man memorable in the Church of God, and who will be memorable till the Lord comes. Praise is 'pleasant' to the Lord, as well as pleasing to us. But again, secondly, Praise is 'good ;' it is sanctifying. There is something in it tending to build up the soul in sanctification. How could it be otherwise? Praise is the element of heaven. If so, much of this praise must be much of heaven. What are some of the elements of heaven? Surely one is joy - holy joy - joy in the Lord. Now, nothing sanctifies more than this joy. Mere sorrow never sanctifies ; sorrow, indeed, turns us away from earthly good, but

in itself the sorrow of the world worketh death. What sanctifies? 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.' It is joy to which we are led by sorrow that sanctifies - joy in the Lord, joy that is the element of heaven.

There is something unselfish in praise. You can suppose prayer to have selfishness in it, and the Lord does not object to a kind of selfishness in our prayers ; that is, our seeking that we ourselves may be receivers of His blessing. But praise is more unselfish, more heaven-like, more, therefore, like Jesus ; it is a giving forth of what we have received. And further, only sing praise truly, and there will be little discontent. Is there a better remedy for discontent than praise, true praise? Where are your murmurs when you are singing praise? Oh, if those that fret and are discontented at little things, or at great things, would only substitute praise, they would soon know it is good to give thanks. Praise is sanctifying: praise chases away hard thoughts of God, which even good men often call 'infirmities,' but which are really downright corruption, and dishonouring to God, as much as were the murmurs in the camp of Israel.

Thirdly, And then praise is 'comely.' You will at once own that praise is very becoming. Only withhold it, and you will see at once what a position you are in. Would it be grateful ? Would you feel as if you were putting yourself in a right position? A good man once said, in a tone of sarcasm, 'I think some Christian people are going to make heaven the place of gratitude, and mean to keep all their gratitude till they get there, they show so little here.' Praise is comely. Then to withhold it is most unseemly. Most unseemly in any circumstances ; for, whatever may be your position as a saint of God, or your position in the world, whatever may be your afflictions, or whatever your circumstances, praise is still comely. Every saint is expected in all circumstances to be able to praise continually. Yet it is not the case that all saints always do. One of our old Scotch writers, John Livingstone, said in his day, 'A line of praise is worth a page of prayer,' because he found it such a rare thing. Do you think he exaggerated? He wished to stir up believers to praise more. And you notice in the Book of Psalms, as it gets near its close, prayer is almost forgotten ; the four last psalms are a joyous burst of praise. The stream when it is just about to join the ocean is all praise, praise to God.

Let me say farther, Are you afflicted? You cannot do wrong in singing praise. It is told of a Welsh girl that her father had died, and the mother came out of the room weeping. The child said, 'Mother, what is the matter?' 'Oh, what shall I do, my child? oh, what shall I do?' 'Mother, what is the matter? 'Your father is dead, child, and what shall I do? ' The child looked up in the mother's face, and said, 'Mother, praise the Lord, praise the Lord.' The mother was reproved : she went away and she tried to praise ; she began to praise the Lord for what was left, and as she began to praise the Lord for what was left to her, she soon found that the burden of her heart was lifted off. The Lord was left ; the Lord with all His grace was still her possession. She was in the position of Habakkuk, who sings, 'Though the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines ; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls ; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.' And then he inscribed his song, ' To the chief singer upon my stringed instruments.' Is not that a pattern for us? Afflicted one, praise the Lord, and tell your afflicted friends to try to praise the Lord. Have you to face some special difficulty, or have you some special duty on hand? Then try praise, as a preface. You know what they do when armies march. What did the Germans do in

their last war? what did the French do? Had they not a military song? Did not the Germans sing the 'Watch on the Rhine?' and did not the French sing the 'Marseillaise?' What should Christian armies do? What did our Captain do before He went to the Mount of Olives, and as He went to the Garden of Gethsemane, the sorest of His conflicts? He sang a hymn - the Master sang a hymn with His disciples. We are almost sure what it was ; it was Psalms 118:1-29, for that was the psalm with which the Passover service was concluded; in that psalm you find this burst of praise (think of the Master singing it) : 'The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted : the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. I shall not die, but live.' Try that in going out to battle! in facing difficulties, try praise.

Anxious souls, try praise. But it is well to guard myself against being misunderstood, for in our day there are too many persons prayed into peace, and there are a great number sung into peace. This peace may be worth nothing. It is excitement ; it is not peace founded on the Word, it is peace founded on the feelings. Peace, if it is not founded on the testimony of God concerning His Son, if it is not founded upon what the Father testifies regarding the accepted offering of His beloved Son, is not a solid peace. Tell anxious souls to try praise ; at the same time, point out to them this aspect of the matter - tell them to praise the Lamb ; tell them to praise Him because He offered Himself as the sacrifice ; tell them to fix their eye upon His blood. For, you notice, in the very act of so doing they have forgotten self. Self-forgotten, it is the Lamb that is remembered ; worthy is the Lamb! I am all unworthiness; worthy is the Lamb! They have got at what they sought. It is analogous to a case that it may be useful to mention. A gentleman in the North never could agree with his friends about full assurance of salvation. He always said, 'I wish I had it, but I cannot get it.' In the providence of God, he was led - I do not remember how - to study very much the subject of the Second Coming of the Lord. He got deeply interested in it ; and when he had got so interested that he could not help talking of it to others, he came up one day to a friend, and said, 'Do you know, a most remarkable thing has happened to me. I began to study that subject for its own sake but in doing so I have entered into full assurance.' And here was the explanation 'My whole mind got fixed on Christ : I forgot myself, and ever since then have found that here is the secret of direct assurance.' It will be even so with this other case : set the anxious soul to sing to the Lamb, and if that soul is enabled to do it, it forgets itself, and enters into peace. But it is not everyone that can sing! Can THE UNSAVED sing? In this present day, one of the devil's snares - and the devil is going about, not so much as a raging lion as like a subtle serpent, 'deceiving the whole world,' and all the more because his time is so short - is music. Everything is music! And they think HEAVEN is simply a place of MUSIC! Are you among those who like hear about the songs of heaven, but who do not care to hear of the song that a soul sings when it gets its feet on the rock? Take care lest you be among the unsaved. What does Paul say? 'Make melody;' but how? 'in your hearts.' And that is not all; he says, 'with grace' - singing with grace in your heart to the Lord. You cannot sing the Lord's song till you have grace in your heart, till you have got the discovery of the free love of God to sinners through His Son. Have you got that? If you continue as you are, you cannot join the song of the redeemed to the Lamb, because you have never counted Him worthy of your heart. If you love your music so well, but love the Lamb so little, instead of joining in that song when the great multitude shall appear with Christ our Head, raising their voices loud as many waters and as mighty thunderings, you will just hear it at a distance for a moment or two, and then go down into the outer darkness, where there is weeping, wailing, gnashing of teeth - ceaseless weeping, eternal wailing, everlasting gnashing of teeth at your own folly in having

missed the day of your opportunity. Do not be deceived by the delight of singing, as if, because you could sing a pleasant hymn, therefore you were one that could sing the new song.

One other remark. There is a song in reserve for David's Two hundred and for all his band. Christ is coming, and there is to be a song then, such as we have never yet sung. The song of Moses we know something of, but it is at the sea of glass that we shall sing the song of the Lamb also. Christ sang when He was on earth. We referred to His singing before He went out to the Mount of Olives; and it is said of His people that they too shall have a song on that day when Christ comes - a song as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept. Now, what may we think regarding that song? If the Lord Jesus, at the first coming in the night in which He instituted the Lord's Supper, Himself gave thanks in the name of God's Church for after ages, did He not also sing that hymn mentioned in Matthew 26:30; for none could sing as He did? Who would not have liked to have heard Him singing in the Upper Room? Who would not have drawn near the Upper Room to have heard Him sing that song before He went to the garden ? We cannot, however, enjoy this gratification; but there is a song in reserve for us which Christ will lead. Yes ! Christ will sing this song Himself. It is said in Psalms 22:1-31, 'In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee ;' and again, 'My praise shall be of Thee in the great congregation.' What will it be to hear Christ singing then, leading the song of praise, and inviting all His ransomed to join Him! Our voices are only tuning now for that day when we shall join Him in 'The Song of the Lamb' - a song which will be for ever and ever. Oh, the joy of that hour when the redeemed (our David's band) hold up their vials full of prayers, which are to be all answered, to Him who has risen up to give at last 'exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think.' But remember, every one of these has a harp also, ready to pour out praises that shall never end - praises for past days at the Brook Besor, as well as for the bright, blissful days now begun in New Jerusalem by the banks of the river that flows from the Throne of God and of the Lamb.

S. Psalm 13:1-6

Psalms 13:1-6 To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever?

How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?

How long shall I take counsel in my soul, - having sorrow in my heart daily?

How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?

Consider and hear me, O Lord my God : lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;

Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; And those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved. But I have trusted in thy mercy; - my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.

I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me. The tone.

Here is what has been called "the Righteous One’s pathetic remonstrance." The darkness may be felt; the time seems long; the night wears slowly away; hope deferred is making the heart sick; heaviness hangs on the eyelid of the watcher.

"How long O Lord, wilt thou forget me still?

How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?

How long shall I lay up counsel in my soul - sorrow in my heart daily?

(storing up plans of relief which all end in sorrow.) How long shall the enemy exalt himself over me?"

David. When David wandered in Judea, and mused on the long-deferred promise of the Throne of Israel, he might use these words first of all. When he saw no sign of Saul’s dominion ending, and no appearance of the Seed of the Woman, he was in such circumstances as fitted him to be the instrument of the Holy Ghost in writing for all after-times words which might utter the feelings of melancholy weariness.

Christ. The Son of David came in the fulness of time. Many a night of darkness He passed through. Sometimes the very shades of death bent over Him. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death !" Could He not most fitly take up verse 4, as He carried His cross along the "Via Dolorosa?" Who more fitly than He might appeal, - "Consider, hear me, O Lord my God (Eli ! Eli !) Make mine eyes glisten with joy, Lest I sleep in death !

Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him, Lest those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved !"

High Priests, Governors, Scribes, Pharisees, Herodians, Sadducees, common priests and common people, were all on the eve of shouting triumph if He rose not from the grave; and a burst of joy from hell would respond to their derision if He failed to arise, and failed to shew himself King of kings.

Christ’s members. But not our Head only, every member of his body also, has found cause oftentimes to utter such complaints and fears. A believer in darkness - a believer under temptation - a believer spending wearisome nights, and lying awake on his couch, may find appropriate language here wherein to express his feelings to God, and all the more appropriate because it is associated with the Saviour’s darkness, and so assures us of His sympathy. We take up the harp which He used in Galilee and Gethsemane; and in touching its strings, do we not recall to our Head the remembrance of "the days of his flesh?"

How glorious too, for the Church to join with her Head in the prospects of verse 5 : - "But as for me, I have trusted in thy mercy," etc.

Leaning on the Father’s love amid these sorrowful appeals, He was sure, and in Him they are sure, of a day of glory dawning - joy coming in the morning. Psalms 13:6 anticipates not only His own resurrection, but the resurrection of the saints also, and the glory of the kingdom : - "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath dealt bountifully with me."

Glory much more abounds - joy has set in instead of sorrow, in full tide; fruition more than realizing the most "ample propositions that hope made" to the weary soul. And this is the blessed issue of what Calvin would perhaps have called, the "QUOUSQUE DOMINE," and which we may call, The Righteous One’s, Lord, how long ?

S. Psalm 77:1-20

Psalms 77:1-20 To the chief Musician. To Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph.

I cried unto God with my voice, Even unto God with my voice ; and he gave ear unto me. In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: My sore ran in the night, and ceased not : my soul refused to be comforted.

I remembered God, and was troubled :

I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah.

Thou holdest mine eyes waking : I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.

I call to remembrance my song in the night :

I commune with mine own heart : and my spirit made diligent search. Will the Lord cast off forever ? and will he be favourable no more ? Is his mercy clean gone forever ? doth his promise fail for evermore ?

Hath God forgotten to be gracious ? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies ? Selah. And I said, This is my infirmity. But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.

I will remember the works of the Lord : surely I will remember thy wonders of old.

I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.

Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary ! Who is so great a God as our God ?

Thou art the God that doest wonders : thou hast declared thy strength among the people.

Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah. The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee : they were afraid : The depths also were troubled. The clouds poured out water : the skies sent out a sound :

Thine arrows also went abroad. The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven : the lightnings lightened the world : The earth trembled and shook.

Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters. And thy footsteps are not known.

Thou leddest thy people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron. The title.

"For Jeduthun," the choir over which Jeduthun and Heman presided (1 Chronicles 16:42). They are to sing now a plaintive psalm. Asaph’s harp’s strings are moaning to the chill night-wind. The tone.

Instead of triumphing in the Mighty One, whom all must fear, Asaph is full of unkindly fears, fears arising from clouds around his soul. Our Lord on earth had such changes in his soul as we find in this Psalm. One day, under the opened heavens at Jordan ; another, in the gloom of the howling wilderness ; one evening, ascending the Transfiguration-hill ; another, entering Gethsemane. And so with every member of his body. Not that the love of their God varies toward them, and not that they themselves feel that love exhausted ; but providences and trials of strange sort, and temptations buffeting the soul, hide the sun by their dark mists. The contents.

We find, Psalms 77:1-4, The time of darkness pictured to us most pensively and plaintively. "In the night my hand was stretched out, and grew not numb,"(Alexander). And the "Selah" in the midst of it, Psalms 77:3, seems to give us time to observe the dismal plight of the soul. In Psalms 77:5-9 we have remembrance of former days, leading to the profoundly melancholy question- "Has El (the Mighty God) forgotten to be gracious."

"Hath he in anger shut the spring of his eternal love? And another "Selah" leaves us to pause and ponder. At Psalms 77:10, The cause of this darkness. "This is my sickness," (Jeremiah 10:19). My present circumstances of body, and the oppressive providences around, have averted mine eye from God's love. Tholuck renders it, "This affliction of mine is a change of the right hand of the Most High ;" but we prefer another view, viz., after having mournfully admitted "This is my infirmity," the thought flashes in, "The years of the right hand of the Most High !" Yes, let me recall what he has done ! At Psalms 77:11, The light breaks - God is seen, still mighty to save. Asaph is taught by "the years of the right hand of the Most High," seeing "his way in the sanctuary ;" and in such past "wonders" as Exodus 15:11. He sees God redeeming "the sons of Jacob" from their Egypt exile, and doing it so as to remind us of "Joseph," once separated from his brethren, but afterwards the head of them all, (Psalms 77:11-15). A "Selah" again bids us to ponder, and the Psalm closes by recounting some of his wonders in providence. "God's way in the sanctuary" (Psalms 77:13) suggests composing thoughts regarding his "Way in the Sea." (Psalms 77:19)

There is a day coming when we shall, with Christ our Head, sing of the Church's safe guidance to her rest, in such strains as these, remembering how often by the way we were ready to ask, "Has God forgotten to be gracious ?" We are taught by the harp of Asaph, in moments of despondency, to "remember the days of old," and assure ourselves that the God of Israel liveth - the God of the Passover-night, the God of the Red Sea, the God of the Pillar-cloud, the God of Sinai, the God of the wilderness, the God of Jordan,- the God, too, we may add, of Calvary, and the God of Bethany, who shall lead us as he led Israel, even when the earth shakes again, till that day when he comes to cast some light on "his way that was in the sea, and his paths that were in the great waters, and his footsteps" that were a mystery.

Asaph has been the instrument of the Holy Ghost to cheer us here, by bidding us to look on this picture of The Righteous One under the cloud recalling to mind the Lord's former doings.

S. Singing before suffering

Singing before suffering.

'When they had sung an hymn'

Matthew 26:30

'NEVER man spake like this man,' and possibly the same might be true of Christ's singing, 'never man sang like this man.' Did angels listen then as did the prisoners to the singing of Paul and Silas at Philippi? What fragrant associations has that upper room, and this also is among them. Christ sang, and the disciples joined. They were, most of them, fishermen, and fishermen are remarkable for their hearty singing. O to have heard the discourses! O to have heard that prayer (John 17:1-26)! And O to have heard that hymn! The singing would be heard outside, and perhaps the young man (Mark 14:51) who followed them to the Garden of Gethsemane may have crept near to listen. Would not you?

I. Christ sang.■His singing showed the reality of His humanity. Aristotle said of his god Jupiter, that no one ever heard of his singing; it would be beneath him. But Jesus sang, and showed He was truly one of us. We like a hymn■specially in affliction (Acts 16:25; Psalms 42:8; Job 35:10). Martyrs have sung going to the stake, and there is a tradition that the three youths in the fiery furnace sang aloud. A hymn is more unselfish than a prayer; it expresses gratitude and love. Hence, heaven is peculiarly the place of song, for all is unselfish there. Christ is on the eve of the most terrible conflict ever witnessed,■to-night and to-morrow the Garden and the Cross! He summons to His help every aid. His eye is on the Father's glory. He bathes Himself in it and is refreshed for conflict.

II. What He sang.■All writers agree that it was Psalms 118:1-29. For two thousand years the Jews have concluded the Passover by singing this Psalm. If you glance over it you will see how appropriate it is, and it came in course at the Passover. What shall we sing? The Master took what came in course. So let us do. At any rate, the Lord will tell you as occasion calls for. Appropriate 'His song shall be with me,' as well as 'My prayer' (Psalms 42:8).

III. When He sang.■After the solemn Passover service and the Supper, and just before the scenes of the Garden, with Calvary in view. We are not told in the Gospels of Christ singing until now■perhaps because His doing so in these circumstances was so peculiar and so fitted to instruct us. His last note was a cheerful note, though He knew what was in the future. Much more should ours be so. Let us try unselfishly, like Jesus, to keep our friends from sorrow as long as we can. In the face of difficulties, sing to the Lord. If you have a dread of what is coming, sing, instead of brooding over it. If you are like the Master■ singing before He went to the Garden■you will be enabled to go fearlessly forward.

IV. When He shall sing again, and what.■When all sorrow and conflict are over (Psalms 22:23, Psalms 69:30, and Psalms 118:21). It will be the day of the Song of Moses and the Lamb. When

He comes again Christ will lead that great multitude of the redeemed whom no man can number, in the song of praise. He will sing over completed redemption at the sea of glass, as did Moses at the Red Sea.

After they had sung this hymn they seem all to have been so elated, in such spirits, so full of joy, that the Master had to put in a word of warning. 'All ye shall be offended because of Me this night.' But, so like the Master, He added, 'But I will not forsake you. I will go before you into Galilee.' But the silly sheep who were to be scattered did not believe Him. Do not blame Peter too much, for they all joined in saying, 'Though I should die with Thee,' etc. Christ did not contradict them. He knew the corruption of their heart; He knew what would happen. When they said this they were full of feeling. Let us not lay too much stress on feeling and emotion when we come to the Lord's Table. Put stress upon this, that the Shepherd's heart will never change toward you. 'Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.'

Chapter 130

S. THE ALTAR OF ABRAHAM

THE ALTAR OF ABRAHAM (Sermon preached in Glasgow, Anderston Free Church, on 29 September 1889. When reading this sermon, it is interesting to note that Andrew Bonar was now 79 years old and most of his friends and his wife (25 years before) had died. He alone seemed to remain for year after year..) 'And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God'

Genesis 21:33 In that spot, half desert, but near a cluster of wells full of clear, clean water, Abraham planted a group of trees - a grove of trees. Now you see him, and you see a little band of pilgrims - we may call them, along with him, dwellers in that spot - entering that grove to call upon the name of Jehovah. You see them, day by day, passing into that grove and there enjoying rest and coolness, and calling on the name of the everlasting God. Brethren, it is Abraham that does this, with his faithful friends. And there is an altar in that grove, an altar which always tells of sacrifice and of blood that flows; for they know they are a company of sinners, and they know that they need the blood of sacrifice as much as Abel did when he laid the lamb upon his altar. Look at that little company compassing their altar in the grove, compassing it round and round, their eye ever resting on the smoke and the fire that consumed the victim, or on the drops of blood that fall from the sacrifice. Look at that little company compassing the altar in meditation and praise and prayer and adoration. But we fail to read the writing on the altar, to read the words written on it : 'Jehovah the everlasting God, Jehovah Elohim' - God of eternity, the everlasting God. But, dear brethren, just as afterwards Jacob reared an altar and called it 'El-Bethel', God of Bethel, in memory of what had been long before there, so it was appropriate for Abraham, wandering from place to place, and having no abiding city here, to have an altar, and write upon it that name, 'The everlasting God', as if he said; 'I am every now and then missing friends, but I have a friend who calls me "My friend Abraham", a friend that will never, never fail or die, the everlasting God.'

Dear brethren, I invite you to take four steady looks at this altar. See Abraham leaning on it, and thinking there upon the days of his pilgrimage. he had been moving up and down, pulling up the pins and loosing the cords of his tents, ofttimes soon after they have been fixed. See Abraham doing this, and often feeling strangely that he is a wanderer, the hope of the promised land deferred, and meeting with much that annoys and troubles his soul ; but he enters that grove, that shady grove, and in the shadow of that grove he finds a quiet time for meeting with Jehovah, the everlasting God. In Hebrews 11:1-40 we find it said that he, and such as were his, 'confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth'. He looked beyond the passing scene; and that grand inscription on the altar, 'Jehovah, the everlasting God', told where his heart and where his treasure lay. Let me ask, is life to you a sojourn, a pilgrimage? You are not settled down in this world ; you are but passing through it. If you are feeling somewhat like Abraham, the only steadfast thing you can point to is Jehovah, your friend, the everlasting God. And can you point to him and claim him? You see him not, but you know him.

But, take a second look at the altar. Here is Abraham leaning on it, and thinking of his fellow-pilgrims. They, too, belong to the family of the everlasting God. But, meanwhile, from time to time some of them are disappearing, and he knows that he may be left soon very lonely. The friends of his childhood, many of them are a-missing. He laid his father Terah in the grave at Haran. He came to this land, and he has seen there, yonder, the smoke of Sodom ascending, the smoke of the doomed city of the plain. Ah! but he has seen something that haunts him continually; he has seen the blight upon his nephew Lot - Lot, like a withered branch - and all this goes to his soul. And he has been constrained to part with Hagar and with Ishmael; and what more there is of change he cannot tell. But all this sends him back to his altar, and it is with unspeakable refreshment that he reads again and again, 'Jehovah, the everlasting God', 'with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.' Quietly resting there, how often has his friend Jehovah held communion with him. Do you thus repair in hours of sadness to the Lord, the everlasting God? Is it thus that you refresh yourself with 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever'? Himself the same; his Word the same.

'Thou remainest', you know it is said of him. You read in the first of Hebrews : 'These heavens shall pass away, but thou remainest,' the everlasting God and Saviour.

I was one day sitting in my study when a visitor asked to be admitted. She came in and sat down. I saw she was under a cloud of sadness and sorrow from bereavement. I was interested. We talked just about two minutes, when I saw her countenance alter; it began to be bright; and then the visitor rose and said : 'Now I can go away, my load is gone.' And as she said it she pointed to the wall. There happened to be upon the wall, 'But thou remainest.' The visitor said to me : 'My eye caught these words half a minute ago; and it is enough, it is enough.' They had poured the oil of joy upon a wounded spirit. Is there anyone here sad and mourning? Read those words : 'Thou remainest.' Look at Abraham's altar and read the inscription, 'Jehovah, the everlasting God.'

But, take a third look at the altar. Here is Abraham leaning on it and looking onward to the eternal city; for we are told expressly in the eleventh of Hebrews that amid all his pilgrim life 'he looked for a city which hath foundations', and such foundation 'whose builder and maker is God'. In that city, he was told by his friend Jehovah, the everlasting God, that he would meet with those whom he had missed for a time. He was going on day by day, just as we are, saying in substance : 'Here we have no abiding city, but we seek one to come.' But when beset by foes; when disturbed by circumstances; when sore tried by the idolatries around him, he turned again to his altar and saw Jehovah, the everlasting God, abiding the same.

Brethren, we have had even more comfort than he, for we have had more tidings from the everlasting God conveyed to us than Abraham had, but even then Abraham got enough to give his soul refreshment and rest; and he would often rejoice, as that passage in Hebrews intimates, in the prospect of meeting in 'the city that hath foundations' with all who had been his fellows and friends here. That city - he would not quite know it : he did not know it so well as John in Patmos knew it. I dare say he often thought, when under the shady trees of the grove :

'What will it be to be there?'

Ah! brethren, we can say no more : we know about the city. And do you never think of what it will be to walk in that city, over its golden streets in the light of that - I was going to say the sun; but

there is no need of the sun there. 'The Lamb is the light thereof' - of that city - in the bright beams that pour from the Lamb - walking there and sometimes saying, as we walk, to one another : 'The beams are too bright; let us go under the shade of this tree of life for a little, and let us talk together there.' Shall we not talk of the past? and shall we not understand the dealings of God then, and sing new songs from day to day as we get new insight into God's ways? These are our prospects. and, dear brethren, surely, having such prospects we ought day by day to be of good cheer, and go on rejoicing in this thought, that there is an abiding city, and one to come.

But, once more, take a fourth look at the altar. Would faithful Abraham (again at his altar! faithful Abraham!) the man who at once believed whatever word God spake; the man who acted upon any hint God gave him as to the path of obedience; the man who leapt for joy when he got just a glimpse of the day of Christ, rejoice in him : 'He rejoiced to see my day : and he saw it, and was glad' - leapt for joy, as the words mean. This is the man we now see again leaning on his altar. And what now? He is telling out his joy, and testifying against all idols. 'The everlasting God, Jehovah' was written on that altar, and none can come near without reading who it is that fills and satisfies Abraham. Abraham's God is an everlasting God. Even the worshippers of idols never supposed that they had more than a limited existence - a poor object of worship for an immortal soul! The immortal soul must have the God of eternity, if it is to be filled and satisfied. John says in his Epistle : 'Little children, keep yourselves from idols.' You and I may have idols, not, indeed, like the idols of the Canaanites : but, if idols, they are bad, and, like their idols, vanish away in smoke. But the everlasting God, Jehovah alone, himself, satisfies and fills our hearts. Oh! brethren, tell your fellow-men the blessedness of those who possess such a portion as this. Tell them that we have an everlasting God; and tell them that he brings out to us such blessings as these : eternal redemption; everlasting righteousness; salvation for ever; eternal life; everlasting loving-kindness, or (it is very forcible literally), the loving-kindness of an eternity - that is our portion. Tell men of these. Our eternal life; our songs and everlasting joy. Tell them of these, and eternal glory on its way, and almost come already. All this is our portion, the portion of those who know that altar, that sacrifice, and the everlasting God : our God through that sacrifice.

Unsaved man! it will not be good news to you to hear that God is the everlasting God, for you have to do with him; and if the atoning blood, of which the altar and its sacrifice was a type, be not sprinkled on you, what a prospect you have in that coming eternity. Do you know it is written in one place, 'eternal judgment'? The sentence passed - the judgment - eternal. Hebrews 6:2 calls it 'eternal judgment', never to be altered. Men say, and devils may say, and teach men to say - No; not eternal. But God says, 'eternal judgment', 'everlasting fire', everlasting as our everlasting God. More than once Christ used that word : 'everlasting punishment'; 'everlasting' - tremendous words, brethren - 'everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord'. The ruin, oh! sinner, unsaved sinner, the ruin of all your theories, all your schemes, all your hopes, ay, and all the joys that you have, such as they are, are swept away. 'Everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord,' that is the portion. 'Everlasting contempt,' also, says the prophet Daniel; not to be pitied, but despised to all eternity for your folly. Richard Baxter says a striking thing about that. He says : 'A wretch condemned to die tomorrow cannot forget it. And yet poor sinners who are uncertain that they will even reach tomorrow, and who are sure that, at any rate, very speedily they will have to stand before the holy majesty of the Judge, can forget all this. Oh! the stupidity of unconcerned souls. Oh! the wonderful folly and distractedness of ungodly men that they can forget.' I say again

that they can possibly forget 'eternal joy', 'eternal woe', 'the eternal God', and 'the place of their eternal abode'. Oh! sinner, there is but a thin veil of flesh between you and that amazing state, yon gulf, the eternal gulf never to be crossed. Today hear his voice, and harden not your hearts.

Chapter 131

S. THE BRETHREN OF OUR LORD

THE BRETHREN OF OUR LORD 'For neither did his brethren believe in him.'

John 7:5

WE know the names of four of our Lord's brethren, James, Simon, Joses, Juda (Mark 6:3). There seems to have been a large family. The idea (originating with popery) is held by some that these were only relatives, not brethren in the strict sense of the word. But the word used, and the connection show that the family relationship is meant to be implied. In this family Christ was brought up. He was the eldest. They cared very little for Him, and treated Him with very little respect. It is a startling statement, but I think we can trace this through all the days of Christ's ministry. When they said to Him (John 7:3), 'Depart hence, and go into Judaea,' they were taunting Him. What a burden of grief must have come to Christ from this quarter! No sympathy at home! Excepting Mary His mother (for Joseph seems to have died very early) He had none to sympathise with Him in His home. How well, therefore, can He feel for any who are similarly situated! Then, again, what prayers this must have drawn from Him. You who have unconverted friends at home, do you pray as Jesus did?

These brethren must have done great injury to Christ's cause. 'They know Him well at home, and they do not believe His claims!' What responsibility they took upon themselves, what awful guilt was theirs! If there be any one of a family wherein there are godly ones living for Christ, and you will not acknowledge them, we say to you, What guilt is yours! But we have evidence which there seems no reason whatever to doubt, that after Christ's resurrection a change took place. The James mentioned in Acts 15:13, and the Jude who wrote the Epistle, were the brothers of our Lord. When the one hundred and twenty disciples were met in the upper room, see, yonder comes in Mary, the mother of our Lord, and who are these with her? James and Jude, Simon and Joses, for it is said, 'Mary, with His brethren.' It seems, therefore, that all Christ's brethren and sisters were changed after His resurrection. We point out this to members of a family where there are unsaved ones. The Lord has often kept the head of a family, or members of a family, praying, and the answer did not come till after their death. Seek so to live that your life will speak after you are gone. The Holy Ghost can turn the most unlikely hearts. These brethren stood out Christ's prayers, His miracles, His sermons, His words; all were in vain. One would have said, 'There is no hope of such men.' But there was; and two of them became most eminent saints. Some stand out long praying-for. What a start James and Jude took! 'Many that are first shall be last, and the last first.' But do not let unsaved ones delay. It is not likely that you will be changed on your death-bed; if you are changed, it will be in your lifetime, that you may afterwards live for Christ.

Turn to Him now.

Chapter 132

S. The Christian's Secret to a Happy Life - The life defined G

The Christian’s Secret to a Happy Life - The life defined G In the first chapter I have tried to settle the question regarding the scriptural basis of the experience sometimes called the higher Christian life. It is the only true Christian life which is best described in the words, the "life hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3). In the second chapter I have sought to bring the two distinct sides of this life together - the part to be done by the Lord and the part to be done by ourselves. I will now consider the point to be settled. The Bible presents a life of abiding rest and continual victory to the believer in the Lord Jesus. That is far beyond ordinary Christian experience. The Bible presents a Savior who saves us from the power of our sins just as He saves us from the guilt of sin. The next point to be considered concerns the nature of the chief characteristics of this "life hid with Christ in God," and how it differs from the greater part of Christian experience. The chief characteristics of the higher Christian life are: a complete surrender to the Lord; a perfect trust in Him, resulting in victory over sin; and finally, inward rest of soul. It differs from the lower range of Christian experience in that it causes us to let the Lord carry our burdens and manage our affairs for us, instead of trying to do it ourselves.

Getting Rid Of Burdens

Most Christians are like a man who was toiling along the road, bending under a heavy burden, when a wagon overtook him, and the driver kindly offered to help him on his journey. He joyfully accepted the offer, but when seated in the wagon, continued to bend beneath his burden, which he still kept on his shoulders. "Why don’t you lay down your burden?" asked the kindhearted driver. "Oh!" replied the man, "I feel that it is almost too much to ask you to carry me, and I could not think of letting you carry my burden too." And so Christians, who have given themselves into the care and keeping of the Lord Jesus, still continue to bend beneath the weight of their burdens, and often go weary and heavy laden throughout the whole length of their journey. When I speak of burdens, I mean everything that troubles us, whether they are spiritual concerns or earthly concerns. The first burden, which I believe to be the greatest burden we have to carry in life, is self. The most difficult thing we have to manage is self. Our own daily living, our feelings, our weaknesses, and temptations - these are the things that confuse us more than anything else. In getting rid of your burdens, therefore, the first one you must get rid of is yourself. You must hand yourself, and all your inward and outward experiences, over into the care and keeping of your God, and leave it there.

He made you and He understands you. He knows how to manage you. All you must do is trust Him to do it. Say to Him, "Here, Lord, I give myself to you. I have tried in every way I could think of to manage myself and to make myself what I know I ought to be, but I have always failed. Now I give it up to you. Take complete possession of me. Work in me all the good pleasure of your will. Mold and fashion me into a vessel that seems good to you. I leave myself in your hands. I believe you will, according to your promise, make me into ’a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master’s use, and prepared unto every good work’" (2 Timothy 2:21). At this point you must

rest and trust yourself continually and absolutely to Him.

Next, you must get rid of every other burden - your health, your reputation, your Christian work, your houses, your children, and your business. In short you must get rid of every inward and outward thing that concerns you.

It is generally easier for us to trust the Lord for our future than it is to trust Him for our present life. We know we are helpless regarding the future, but we feel as if the present is in our own hands and must be carried on our own shoulders. Most of us have an unconfessed idea that it is enough to ask the Lord to carry ourselves without asking Him to carry our burdens, too.

Leaving Burdens with God

I knew a Christian lady who had a very heavy earthly burden. It took away her sleep and her appetite, and there was danger of her health breaking down under it. One day, when it seemed especially heavy, she noticed lying on the table near her a little tract called "Hannah's Faith." Attracted by the title, she picked it up and began to read it, little knowing, however, that it was to create a revolution in her whole experience. The story was of a poor woman who had been carried triumphantly through life of unusual sorrow. She was giving the history of her life to a kind visitor on one occasion. When she finished the visitor said, "Oh, Hannah, I do not see how you could bear so much sorrow!" "I did not bear it," was the quick reply "the Lord bore it for me." "Yes," said the visitor, "that is the right way. We must take our troubles to the Lord." "Yes," replied Hannah, "but we must do more than that. We must leave them there. Most people," she continued, "take their burdens to Him, but they bring them away with them again, and are just as worried and unhappy as ever. But I take mine and leave them with Him, and come away and forget them. If the worry comes back, I take it to Him again. I do this over and over, until at last I just forget I have any worries and am at perfect rest." My friend, very much struck with this plan, resolved to try it. She couldn't change the circumstances of her life, but she took them to the Lord and handed them over into His management. She believed that He took them, and she left all the responsibility and the worry and anxiety with Him. When the anxieties returned, she took them back to the Lord. The result was, that although the circumstances remained unchanged, her soul was kept in perfect peace in the midst of them. She felt that she had found out a practical secret. From that time she never attempted to carry her own burdens or to manage her own affairs, but to hand them over to the Lord as fast as they arose. This same secret so effective in her outward life, also proved to be still more effective in her inward life. She gave her whole self to the Lord with all that she was and all that she had. Believing that He took all she had committed to Him, she stopped worrying and her life changed for the better. She found out a simple secret. It was possible to obey God's commandment contained in the words, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Php 4:6). By obeying this promise the result would inevitably be the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Php 4:7) Rest In The Lord

There are many other things to be said about this life hid with Christ in God. There are many details concerning what the Lord Jesus does for those who give themselves to Him. The heart of the whole matter is stated here. The soul that has discovered this secret of simple faith has found the key that will unlock the whole treasure house of God.

I am sure these pages will fall into the hands of some child of God who is hungering for such a life as I have been describing. You long unspeakably to get rid of your weary burdens. You would be delighted to hand over the management of your unmanageable self into the hands of one who is able to manage you. You are tired and weary, and what I speak about looks unutterably sweet to you. Do you recall going to bed with a great sense of rest after a day of great exertion and weariness? How good it felt to relax every muscle and let your body go in perfect abandon of ease and comfort! The strain of the day had ceased, for a few hours at least, and the work of the day had been forgotten. You no longer had to hold up an aching head or a weary back. You trusted yourself to the bed in absolute confidence, and it held you up without effort or strain or thought on your part. You rested! But suppose you had doubted the strength or the stability of your bed. Suppose you were frightened that at any moment it would give way beneath you and you would land on the floor. Could you have rested then? Every muscle would have been strained in a fruitless effort to hold yourself up and the weariness would be greater than if you had not gone to bed at all.

Let this analogy teach you what it means to rest in the Lord. Let your souls lie down upon the couch of His sweet will as your bodies lie down in their beds at night. Relax every strain and release every burden. Let yourself go in perfect abandon of ease and comfort. Be assured that since He holds you up you are perfectly safe. Your part is simply to rest. His part is to sustain you. He cannot fail.

Freedom From Care

Let us look at another analogy which our Lord Himself has abundantly approved - that of the childlife. For "Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said: "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:23).

Now, what are the characteristics of a little child, and how does it live? It lives by faith. Its chief characteristic is freedom from care. Its life is one long trust from year’s end to year’s end. It trusts its parents. It trusts its teacher. It even sometimes trusts people who are completely unworthy of trust. A child’s trust is answered abundantly. The child provides nothing for itself and yet everything is provided. It takes no thought for the morrow, and forms no plans, and yet all its life is planned out for it. It finds its paths made ready and prepared as it comes to them day by day and hour by hour. It goes in and out of its father’s house with ease. It enjoys all the good things of the home without having spent a penny in procuring them. Under its father’s tender care the child does not worry about disease. Famine and fire and war may rage, but the child abides in utter unconcern and perfect rest. It lives in the present moment and receives its life unquestioningly as it comes to it day by day from its father’s hands.

I was visiting once in a wealthy home where there was a little adopted child who received all the love and tenderness and care that human hearts could give. As I watched that child running in and out day by day, free and lighthearted, with the happy carelessness of childhood, I thought what a picture it was of our wonderful position as children in the house of our Heavenly Father. And I said to myself, "If the loving hearts around this child would be grieved to see her worried or anxious about herself in any way about whether her food and clothes would be provided, or how she was to get her education or her future support. How much more must the great, loving heart of our God

and Father be grieved and wounded at seeing His children taking so much anxious care and thought!" And I understood why it was that our Lord had said to us so emphatically, 'Take no thought for your life' (Matthew 6:25). Who is taken care of the best in every household? Is it not the little children? And does not the least of all, the helpless baby, receive the largest share? We all know that the baby doesn't work or sew, yet it is fed, clothed, loved, and rejoiced in more tenderly than the hardest worker of all. This life of faith, then, about which I am writing, consists in just this being a child in the Father's house. And when this is said, enough is said to change every weary, burdened life into one of blessedness and rest.

Let the ways of childish confidence and freedom from care, which so please you and win your hearts in your own little ones, teach you what should be your ways with God. Leave yourselves in His hands. Learn to be literally "careful for nothing" and you will find it to be a fact that "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee" (Isaiah 26:3) . This is the divine description of the life of faith about which I am writing. It is no speculative theory, neither is it a dream of romance. There is such a thing as having one's soul kept in perfect peace here in this life. Childlike trust in God is the key to its attainment.

S. The City of Refuge

The City of Refuge.

'Appoint for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses; and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood'

Joshua 20:2-3

There were six cities of refuge in the land of Israel. These were so situated that any manslayer, when pursued, might find his flight directed and his escape assisted by the very nature of the ground where they stood.

(1.) Three of them stood on one side of Jordan and three on the other. No river rolled between him and his place of safety.

(2.) All of them stood in plains; Kedesh in the plains of Zaanaim, Sychem in the plain of Moreh, Hebron in a level wilderness, Golan and Ramoth-Gilead at the foot of their adjoining hills. The manslayer had no up-hill race to run in seeking deliverance ; there was nothing in his way which might hinder his flight.

(3.) Near each city (except Bezer, which required no further mark, being seen afar on the long spacious heath) stood a hill, that served the purpose of an ensign to guide the guilty man, and to invite him to the refuge. Kedesh had the hill of Naphtali close by. Sychem had Mount Gerizzim. Hebron had those vine-terraced heights, on which Abraham once stood and saw the smoke of Sodom. Golan had the heights of Bashan ; and Ramoth-Gilead stood under the lofty hills of Gilead. He who appointed these cities took care that they should be marked afar off, that the steps of one seeking refuge might without difficulty be guided towards them. For it was intended by all these peculiarities, to show the sinner's road to the Redeemer. No river rolls between him and Christ! No hills raise their barrier between him and the Saviour. The way is plain and open; it is broad and level ; and while yet afar off his eye catches a glimpse of that ensign which waves on Calvary, over the city of refuge,- 'As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked ; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die..' (Ezekiel 33:11.) This, even while he is yet a great way of, kindles hope and keeps it alive.

One of these cities of refuge was Hebron - well known as being the place where Abraham long abode. Let us linger for a little at this city, and call to mind some of those sights often seen in other days from its walls and within its gates. The inhabitants there dwelt safely as in a 'peaceable habitation, in a sure dwelling, and in a quiet resting place.' The vines clothed the surrounding hills, and rich crops waved over the plains of Mamre. Not far off was the spot, where, under a spreading oak, Abraham, 'the friend of God' (Genesis 35:27,) had held communion with his Redeemer. Oftentimes in the cool of the clay, when the breeze of evening had begun to awake, the people might be seen on the flat roofs of their houses, or the top of their city walls, enjoying the scene and

remembering former days. Many a song of praise ascended, many a holy meditation was enjoyed, many a thankful emotion kindled. But occasionally the peace of this happy hour was suddenly disturbed by a piercing cry of alarm that resounded from the valley - a cry of fear and a cry of rage and wrath. The citizens stopped their song and saw a trembling murderer, with horror on his brow, in full speed making for the gate, and behind him, with bare sword, the avenger of blood pressing on with relentless fury. Sometimes, it is likely, if for a moment the pursuer slackened his speed, they saw the weary manslayer incautiously sit down to rest, thinking that now he was so near his refuge, he might abate his anxiety ; and then the avenger would seize the favourable opportunity, spring on him, and plunge the sword into his soul. Oh! the agonising look the wretched man gave in death toward the city! and his awful cry of despair, as he yielded up his breath with guilt on his conscience, and remorse gnawing his soul! Sometimes too they saw one in his flight come close up to the gate ; but he hesitated to enter, stood doubting, afraid to go in, though trembling for the approach of the avenger, until, ere he was aware, the avenger smote him to the dust, and he breathed his last with his dying head bent down on the very threshold of the gate! But oftener still they saw the pursued flying murderer come with full speed down the valley, reach the open gate, bound over the threshold, and stand in safety within ! the elders of the city met him, and asked him how he had ventured in so boldly. 'You are stained with blood, and your trembling frame testifies that you are a guilty man?' 'Yes, I own it is true, but on that very account I fled for refuge.' 'But why have you come hither? No native of the city is like you; they are all children of Abraham.' 'True, but though no native be like me, yet many like me have got in, for God himself has called it a city of refuge.' 'But you bring no recommendation?' 'God never spoke of any recommendation being needed.' 'Still, you have given no reason why you in particular should expect to be received?' 'Yes, for the warrant is, that any and every manslayer may come.' The elders smiled well pleased; the manslayer was secured in the place of refuge ; and there was praise in all the city because another was saved. The delivered man soon joined in their hymns to the God of his life ; but oftener still sang in their hearing some peculiar songs of praise, which none could sing but a manslayer that had fled for refuge (Revelation 14:3.) Frequently, too, the whole company of delivered men would meet together, talk over their dangers, tell of their escape, and unite their voice and heart in these songs of deliverance (Acts 2:42.)

These events in Israel were intended as a type of what takes place in the kingdom of God on earth. The manslayer, wet with the blood of his fellow, is the type of a sinner. And in choosing no other than a manslayer to be the type of a sinner, God points out the murderous nature of sin. Sin brings death on the man himself, and thrusts the sting of the second death into his soul. The sinning soul crucifies Christ afresh ; it quenches, or, in other words, tries to extinguish the life of the Holy Spirit ; it wishes that there were no God, or, in other words, aims at the very being of God the Father. O sinner, how deep is the crimson dye of your soul! How can you escape the damnation of hell? On the other hand, the avenger of blood represents or personifies the stern but most righteous demands for vengeance, made by the holy law, pursuing the unforgiven sinner, in order to execute the sentence, 'Thou shalt surely die' (Genesis 2:17.) And the city of refuge is the salvation provided for the sinner in Christ Jesus, bestowed without money, and without price, without preparation and without delay, on every soul of man that flees to Him as the refuge from the wrath to come. From the walls and battlements of heaven, angels have seen many such sights as the men of Hebron used to see. Let us lead you to some of them.

1. They have seen many a manslayer. They have seen many a soul - and you among the rest, stained with crimson guilt, yet sitting at ease. Have they not seen you destroy your soul? Then you are a man-slayer. Have they not seen you by your words, and influence of your example, prevent others from being saved? Have they not seen you wishing in your heart that God were away, or that there was no God? And is not this really wishing for and attempting to compass the death of God? You have wished there were no Christ, and no Holy Spirit! O blood-stained, murderous soul, you stand charged with murder, accomplished in regard to yourself, and your neighbours, and with designs against the life of the Holy God! Perhaps the devil keeps you at rest, and persuades you not to be alarmed. Eat, drink, and be merry! But, nevertheless, you are a man-slayer. You ruin your own soul, and your example ruins your friends; and you are an enemy that entertains murderous designs against God. The avenger has not forgotten you.

2. They have seen many a man-slayer awakened. Few sinners in our land remain unvisited by some convictions ; yet few of them flee from the wrath to come. Some are left miserable by a sense of guilt, that hangs over them, like a black cloud, night and day,- 'all their life the subject to bondage' (Hebrews 2:15.) They have many forebodings of danger, yet companions, and pleasures, and their dislike of a change, and the secret hope that perhaps all is not true that is threatened, stifle their feelings, and hinder them from fleeing. Is this your state? Are you a sinner aware of your danger? If so, surely you must flee? You dare not sit still. What though you repent, and are sorry, and shed tears, and reproach yourself for your folly ? - all that is vain. The avenger of blood never ceases on that account. Indeed, you are more likely to be cut off suddenly than many others ; for your convictions will make Satan afraid of losing you, and your delaying to flee will provoke God, so that he will wait no more. Up, up, and flee for your life You dare not sit still. O if you would flee, there would be deep, deep interest in you, felt by the people on the walls of Hebron - the angels in heaven. To see you running to the city of refuge - that would be a blessed sight ! Up, and run speedily! Many have run along that road to the city ; the way to Christ has been traversed by thousands, some more, and some less guilty than you, who knew that he was their only refuge. 'The kingdom of heaven is preached, and every man presseth into it.'

3. They have seen many fleeing towards the city. This is more than being awakened by a sense of danger and need. They have begun to seek deliverance; they flee! Are you a fleeing sinner? If you are, there are some marks that men will not fail to see in you. For example, you will be affected by a sense of your own personal guilt and danger: you will not be fleeing just because others are doing so. You will have a feeling of immediate need; you cannot put off the matter to a distant day. You will also feel engrossed to a great degree with concern to escape ; a fleeing man-slayer would not be hindered with the trifles on the road, or the people whom he met. You will forsake the company of friends that hinder you. Above all, your eye will be ever looking toward the mountain-height that marks the place of refuge, and along the plain that leads to it ; your thoughts will be occupied with the open door; and your delight will be to hear of those who fled and got in safely. You will be ever looking for Jesus, and rejoicing in whatever leads to a view of him, whether a sermon, or the Bible, or prayer. You will be meditating on his completed work, which opens the fountain for sin and uncleanness. You will delight to read and hear of such as Paul, and Manasseh, and those Jerusalem-sinners who, in every view, were even more than man-slayers, for they crucified the 'Son of Man,' 'the fellow of the Almighty.' But remember there can be no safety for you short of the city; none, none, till you are within it. It is not being 'almost persuaded to

be a Christian;' - it is not being 'not far from the kingdom of God,' - that will save your soul. It is not setting out and running toward the gate, nor even touching the threshold - but it is getting over the threshold, and getting in, that will be your safety. If the man-slayer stopped short of this, he might as well have never tried to flee. No sinner can be pardoned until a sufficient testimony is left against his sin, and this can be done only by his actual coming to Christ Jesus. No man-slayer could be forgiven until he got to the city, the very appointment of which was God's testimony against the man's guilt and deserved punishment. No sinner can be forgiven in a righteous way, except by being hid in Christ. Hopes, desires, wishes, convictions, fears, sorrows, in such a case, are no more than shrubs or flowers, that line the road to the city.

4. They have seen the joyful entrance of many into the city of refuge. Fearful, weary, faint, they came up to the open gate and ventured in, because it was open for such as they. They believed Christ to be the sinner's way to the Father. They came to view his finished and perfect work in behalf of sinners; they examined it, and perceived both its fitness and its fulness ; they saw that the Father considered it a wide enough entrance for any sinner; and so they ventured in. Jehovah had declared it to be sufficient, and that was enough for them. Let us ask them, and see their grounds of faith. 'You are stained with blood,' it might be said to them; 'you have been guilty of trampling under foot the Son of God, and aiming many a blow at the life and heart of God; and your conscience tells you that you deserve vengeance; and nothing but filth appears on your person. How dare you come hither?' They reply, 'For the very reason that we are blood-stained sinners we have fled to Jesus.' Ask again, 'How could you ever hope to see the King in His beauty; His people are a holy people ?' They reply, 'True, but blood-stained souls have become white in His blood, His precious blood was shed for this very end.' 'But you bring no recommendation ? you say nothing of your previous efforts, prayers, tears, good deeds, sincere obedience?' 'No, we say nothing of these, for they are not required to our being accepted in the Beloved.' 'Well, then, at least, show why you in particular venture to come?' 'Our warrant is His own sure word, whosoever cometh I will in no wise cast out.' And now the gate closes them in. They shall go no more out. Angels welcome them with songs; and Father, Son, and Spirit rest over them in love. There is joy in heaven over them!

These redeemed, however, are nevertheless not yet perfect. Their iniquities are forgiven, and every sin blotted out; but their hearts retain much corruption. But to promote holiness they keep much in each other's company and help each other's joy. They often sing such songs as that of Romans 8:31-34, 'If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us!'

O what peace and joy! No frown of a displeased God, for His anger is turned away, and He comforts them! With joy they draw water out of the wells of salvation, and as they survey and examine their city of refuge, they find new reasons for joy and enduring gratitude. Now that they are in Christ, they inquire freely as to the past; and they find that all along, from the first hour they began to flee, it was the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father in the name of Christ, who was drawing them (John 6:44.) At the time that they felt alarmed, and yet lingered in their sins, it was a secret drawing of the Divine hand that enabled them at length to get away from others, and really to flee

for refuge. At the time when they had nearly stopped short, attracted by the golden apples which Satan scattered in their path, it was the Spirit that drew them on. At that moment, when, faint and weary, they had well-nigh sat down in despair, it was the drawing of the Father through the Holy Spirit that brought them onward still. And when at length they saw so clearly where to rest, and felt themselves able to rest satisfied in Christ alone, it was the Holy Spirit who caused the scales to drop from their eyes, and who effectually persuaded their souls. O, how full now is their gratitude to Father, Son, and Spirit,- Thou hast loved us with an everlasting love, and with everlasting kindness hast Thou drawn us! They are never heard to boast of anything but of Him; not even of their own faith, their eager running to the city. No; for that, too, was owing to the Spirit He sent into them (Ephesians 2:5), and it was not that, but the city, that saved them.

They reach further still in their discoveries of God's wondrous ways towards them. They are taken into a chamber in the council-house of the city of refuge, and allowed to read its records. The Book of Life is shown to them, and they find now that they were elected from all eternity! and that it was in consequence of the purpose of God that they were called and drawn by the Spirit of Jesus. Amazing grace! How deeply fixed is the foundation of their safety! They feel humbled at the same time; for they were chosen for no good in themselves at all, but wholly to the praise and glory of Him who called them. It was mere grace that made the difference between them and other man-slayers. Every new discovery yields matter for praise and adoration. They go down to the gates to praise the Lord among the assembled people. They forsake not the assembling of themselves together, but go to their own company -(Acts 4:23)- whenever opportunity occurs. Their life is a life of happy, cheerful faith in Him whose finished work redeemed them, and of unceasing love and devotion to Him who called them out of darkness into marvellous light. Often are they heard singing, 'We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gate, that the righteous nation that keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is the rock of ages.' (Isaiah 26:1-4.) But like the saved man-slayer who dared not be found beyond the gate of the city until the High Priest had gone to glory (Numbers 35:25), they dare not for an hour go out of their place of safety. They abide in Christ. However holy they become, whatever reputation they have gained, however honoured and distinguished for spiritual attainments, they abide in Christ alone. Their first security was found in Him, and it is their security to the last. Though laden with the fruits of righteousness, and filled with all the graces of the Spirit, they depend for safety on the enclosing wall of their city of refuge, as much as does the sinner that only yesterday came in. And so they will remain till their High Priest enter upon 'his glorious rest' (Isaiah 11:10); and then they shall share with Him in that joy, each one receiving his inheritance and possessing an unchanging love. For this they are always longing. Oftentimes they ascend the battlements and towers of their strong city to look out for any signs of the coming glory; or sitting at their windows, they turn their eye to the east to see if there be any streaks of the dawn. For when from the New Jerusalem the tidings shall arrive that Jesus our High Priest has entered into His rest, then shall His redeemed return to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

'FEAR GOD AND GIVE GLORY TO HIM, FOR THE HOUR OF HIS JUDGMENT IS COME! (Revelation 14:7.)

Chapter 134

S. The Conversion of Children

Andrew Bonar

Andrew Bonar The Conversion of Children

There is a practical error very common among God's people. All of them profess to believe that the Holy Spirit may convert souls at any age, and that conversion cannot take place too soon; while yet they do not look for the conversion of children with the same lively faith that they manifest in asking and expecting the Holy Spirit to change those who are of riper years. The same warm-hearted believers who labour for the souls of older persons, and are, in the case of such, satisfied with nothing but conversion without delay, do not practically so feel and act in dealing with the young. They are satisfied if the young give attention to the truth, and if they seem not unwilling to retain in their thoughts what they learn. They do not press home the immediate, present acceptance of Christ on children as they would do on grown-up persons.

They would go home from any other meeting disappointed, sad, and unsatisfied, if, night after night, souls were unawakened and unsaved, though attentive and interested; and yet, in the case of children, they can allow of delay. They can leave their Sabbath class or their family circle without alarm and without anxiety, though there be therein no symptom of real awakening, and no evidence of these young souls finding the Saviour.

One reason for the difference thus made in the case of the young is, with many, the misunderstanding of certain texts of Scripture - at least so we are strongly inclined to think.

1. One person quotes Proverbs 22:6, 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' The person with whom this text is a favourite probably applies it thus - 'Only teach the plan of salvation to a child, and show wisdom's happy ways to a child, and, though at the time the child be not converted, yet, when he is old, he will no doubt take the way you have taught him.' But is this true? and is this the sense of the text? Very far from it! The Holy Spirit means to teach us quite another lesson by these words, viz., 'Only be sure that you get the child in the way while still a child, and you need never fear in regard to that child's after perseverance.' It is, 'Initiate a child in the way' [see the Hebrew], or at the beginning of the way: get the truth introduced into his soul while he is a child, and rest assured that he shall go on as he has begun. It is a blessed text to encourage us to seek the present and immediate conversion of children.

2. Another person uses a figure, and soothes his conscience under lack of success, in his class or in his family, by saying, 'Well, at any rate I am filling the water-pots with water [John 2:7], so that there shall be the greater amount of wine at a future day, when at length the water is turned into wine by the Lord's miraculous power, in the hour of conversion.' Now this is only a figurative application of a text, and no argument at all. But, even using their own figure, how is it that they do not expect the turning of the water into wine to be immediate? What is there in the passage to which they allude to warrant their waiting on till a distant time? Was not the water changed into wine in these water-pots in a single hour? Indeed, it seems that the change took place in the very

act of filling the vessels.

3. A third person has much to say, in a doctrinal form, on the text in Php 1:6, 'He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it,' applying the passage to feelings, impressions, interest awakened among the young in the course of common, weekly teaching. There is no conversion in such cases; but then it is alleged, 'There is real interest felt, there is impression made, and so the good work is begun and, if begun, shall go on.' We reply, there is a serious mistake here, for 'The good work begun' means that conversion has taken place; conversion is the good work that begins the Christian life. Read the context, and see this beyond doubt or dispute. The apostle says, 'He that has converted you, placing you on Christ the foundation, will not forsake you, but will carry on the building to completeness in the day of Christ's appearing.' So that this text is really an argument in favour of our not being content with anything in the form of mere impression, hopeful interest, conviction. We must see conversion-work, we must see salvation-work, we must see the Christian life really begun. And this applies to the case alike of old and young.

There is, apart from and besides all this, a secret feeling on the part of many Christians that it is not so important, nor so great a service, to be the means of converting children as it is to be the means of converting adults. They have no scripture proof of this view; for 'converting a sinner' means any sinner, young as well as old; and 'turning many to righteousness' includes young and old; and 'winning souls' limits us to no age. But nevertheless such persons feel, without putting their feelings into words, that it is a more palpable and evident gain to win an intelligent adult than to win his child to Christ. Now, this quiet persuasion, [appearing in their practice], may arise from the thought that these adults are of present value in society: their conversion will at once affect society; while the conversion of the young is at the time unfelt beyond the circle of the family and a few companions. But, on the other hand, they forget that young souls, brought to Christ in very infancy, will be exercising an influence, year by year, all life long, in all the different stages of their growth, and at length, on reaching manhood, will, by God's grace, mightly move for good their circle of society - over and above the consideration of the evils escaped and the ill that was never done.

There is, however, a more serious mis-apprehension lying at the root of this undervaluing of early conversion. In reality, many godly people do look upon the conversion of children as a thing to be stood in doubt of. They scarcely believe that no child's conversion is so deep and genuine as that of an adult. They admit that all conversion alike is the work of the Holy Ghost, and that He does, when it pleases Him, convert children as well as adults. Still, they habitually ignore apparent conversion in children; they have a theory that children imitate old people, and that therefore these appearances are to be put down to imitation only. In dealing with such persons we say:

[a] There must surely be cases of real conversion among children, if the Word of God is to be our standard; for surely Psalms 8:2, is written for all ages, and our Lord has commented upon it thus, in Matthew 21:16, 'Have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise ?' If 'old men and children' alike are called on [Psalms 148:12] to praise the Lord, surely it is implied that they are alike capable of saving grace. Indeed, for one moment to suppose the matter otherwise would be to assert that the gospel is not suited to the souls of the young.

[b] There is a peculiar fitness [we might say, divine propriety] in the gospel being blessed to the conversion of children. The same Holy Spirit in all cases uses the gospel for saving souls; but, in

applying it to children, He illustrates most notably two of its features, viz., its entire freeness [for what could a child give to God ?], and its amazing simplicity, which is so humbling to the pride of self-righteous man. 'I thank thee, O Father, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes' [Luke 10:21, and as Jesus said this, 'He rejoiced in spirit']. 'Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein' [Luke 18:17]. Nothing was done by the babes or little children whom Christ blessed but this, they let Him lift them up in His arms without resistance, and received what He gave without offering Him any price in return!

[c] The drawing love of the cross of Christ [looking for a moment at the matter from man's point of view] surely appeals as readily and suitably to the hearts of children as to adults. Nay, is it not into the young heart that we might expect such kindness and love should find entrance, even if older souls were unmoved by it ?

[d] The doctrine of the substitution of Christ for sinners, 'the Just for the unjust,' 'the Shepherd for the sheep,' is the very heart and essence of the gospel; and is not this the very truth of all others that finds entrance into the understanding of any child? We do not now speak of the heart or conscience, but of the understanding. Even a very child can be made to apprehend the meaning of substitution - of the One for the many; just as the 'Happy Mute' was made at once to see how the giving of one gold ring for thousands of withered leaves was an over-payment in exchange. Hence it is always this grand truth that we ought to press on the very youngest soul. We tell them, 'You are sinners, exposed to God's wrath and curse, and you cannot save yourselves; but God's own Son can save you, by Himself bearing that wrath and curse.' In some such form as this the Spirit brings in faith to a child's soul; and, once received, is not this truth the same in its effects on the young as on the old ? Is not the text John 1:12 as true in the case of a child as in the instance of an intelligent adult, 'As many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God' ?

Children ought to be dealt with, in regard to the duty of accepting Christ, as closely and seriously as older people. The difference, no doubt, is considerable in the method we take with the young and with the older. In the former case, we have no metaphysical difficulties to deal with. We find, however, the same need in both cases of being like Nathan in his parable; we need to look the old man and the child alike in the face, and say, 'You are meant. Will you accept the Saviour who has saved so many by taking on Him their sins, and bearing their punishment ?' Personal dealing is required; a dealing with them one by one. In the early part of the century there were Associations for Sabbath School Teaching in Edinburgh and elsewhere, consisting of warmhearted men who delighted to show the gospel to others. These directed their main efforts toward the conversion of children. We have heard some of these old Christians tell how they never let the classes go without drawing out the gospel from the lesson, and seeking to carry it home by apt illustrations. They were not content with sending them away to pray; they sent them to Christ on the spot. The result was that there were many brought to Christ at an early age in the Sabbath Schools. We have heard of even startling cases occurring, such as a case of clear evidence of conversion given by a child of four years of age. But we ask again, why do many in our day regard with suspicion cases of very early conversion?

1. One reason seems to be, they fancy that every manifestation of delight in and love to Christ is altogether a matter of feeling, and not of faith, in these children. Now, if it were so, they would have some good grounds for their scepticism. But then we assert that the evidence goes to prove the opposite; for these young people furnish full evidence of faith in the Lord Jesus; and we complain that they who doubt it have not taken sufficient pains to inquire. They get their data at second hand. They do not go and get acquainted with the cases by personal converse.

2. Another reason alleged for their doubt is, that these children do not manifest holiness in the way in which it is manifested by adults. Well, this is true; but children's play, and children's natural buoyance, should no more come in the way of our believing their real conversion, than should, in older people, their occasional engrossing care and anxiety about business. Children's conscientiousness in lessons, and fairness in playing games, and command of temper, may yield as true a proof of sanctification begun, as do the integrity of the adult, and his firm adherence to principle in matter of merchandise. It is quite true that in the case of a child we may more easily mistake feeling for faith than in the case of a grown-up person; but this only calls for patient attention and caution on our part; it does not discredit the reality of faith in the case of those who manifest it, and the evidences of whose faith we have opportunity of knowing. Shall we not then ask the Church of Christ to cherish expectancy in regard to the conversion of children far more than has been done in times past ? Have we not leaned upon our oars ? Have we not slipped into the custom of showing to our Sabbath Schools and families what a great and glorious salvation has been provided, and what a gracious and mighty Saviour is ours, without sufficiently urging them to make all this their own ? We have dealt with the adults and with the aged earnestly, taking no excuses, but insisting on their immediate acceptance of Christ; but we have not been wont to deal thus also with the very youngest who can understand. If the Lord works by instrumentalities, and if it is by suitable instrumentalities, then let us see that we are taking the right way to bring blessing to the young. As a rule, the Lord does not convert souls in the absence of means, and in the absence of appropriate and right means. In heathen lands, souls perish because no one there shows to sinners the way of life. In our own neighbourhoods, men and women die unconverted, if no one goes among them seeking to win their souls. And so in our Sabbath-schools and families children grow up unconverted, because they are not more personally dealt with. Are we not letting the souls of the young perish, if we do not rouse ourselves to take part in this personal mode of applying the truth ?

Lord, sharpen our sickles when we go to reap Thy harvest among the young; for we have heard our Master say, 'Have ye not read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise ?'

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Chapter 135

S. The Cravings of the Conscience Satisfied through Jesus

The Cravings of the Conscience Satisfied through Jesus by Andrew A Bonar

“Justified freely by His grace, through redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness”

Romans 3:24-25.

Paul had just traversed the valley of Dry Bones. He had stood with us there (Romans 3:23) pointing to men everywhere, men in every age, while he uttered by the Holy Ghost the declaration, “All have sinned.” There is sin on all, there is guilt on all; “all have come short of the glory of God.” If you and your fellow men have not sinned grossly, so that even the world condemns you, nor so evidently that even your own conscience brings in the verdict of guilt; yet certainly you have not glorified God. You have come behind in the race; you have failed to reach the mark, “the glory of God;” your heart has never loved God with all its strength. You are lost, you are ruined, doomed, condemned already. But a Savior has come along this valley. Salvation is in Him. What He did and suffered saves; and when He testifies of Himself He brings the salvation near. If in Exodus 34:6-7, there be a sevenfold proclamation of the name of the God of grace, not less is there in this passage a sevenfold unfolding of the grace which our God and Savior brings.

We write at this time especially for those whom God has led down into that valley, persons whom God has awakened, and who are moving about amid gloomy apprehensions of sin, guilt, helplessness, wrath, death, and God’s averted face. We wish to direct you to God’s real feelings toward you, God’s gracious provision for your case, God’s grand means of relief ready for you, as set forth by the Holy Ghost in the above passage of the Word. It was to the Ethiopian eunuch, when reading the Word, that the Holy Ghost drew near; and it was the truth about the Lamb led to the slaughter that the Holy Ghost used in bringing joy to that anxious soul, when “walking through dry places, seeking rest and finding none.” So it is still His way to make use of the Word, and of what the Word tells of the Savior. There is some view of God in Christ exactly fitted to confront and to compose every vexing thought and every alarm in your convinced soul; all which views you must find in the written Word, for you can find them only there. The Word is the glass or mirror in which the heart and mind of God are reflected and made known to us. To the Word you must go; your own thoughts and feelings can afford you no guidance. Be, then, like Augustine, who, at a time when his soul was as tossed and darkly troubled as yours, seemed to hear a voice saying, “Take up and read! Take up and read!” and who, in so doing, by one of the passages of this Epistle, was led to rest. Or, better still, let us pray that you, dear reader, may be as the poet Cowper, who, in the act of reading the very verses before us, obtained a clear view of the gospel, was filled with joy unspeakable, and spent some days thereafter in nothing but prayer and praise. What say you then?

1. Your eye is on the sentence against you. You read, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” You are Belshazzar reading the handwriting on the wall, “Mene, Tekel!” Your days of mercy numbered!

Yourself weighed and found wanting! But the first word here is, “justified,” a word that says that there is such a thing as pardon for the sinner; ay, and pardon most thorough and complete! Pardon that leaves the sinner in the position of one made righteous! Justification means more than pardon. For (as your conscience and the Word of God tell you) the law has both precepts which must be kept, and prohibitions, which, if infringed, are rigorously punished; and so justification is an act of God the Judge, acquitting the sinner from every charge of having violated the prohibitions of the law, and accepting Him as one who has perfectly fulfilled every precept. What news! God is acting thus to thousands in our world, sinners like you. Is not this a ray of hope? There is such a thing with God as justification.

2. Your eye is on yourself. Though you see that God may justify sinners, yet, now when you look at yourself, hope is gone. “I have no claim to this blessing; I deserve nothing. I cannot bring even such amount of feeling, of repentance, of desire, as might be pleasing to God. Alas, for me!” But the second word here shoots in its ray, “freely.” This word means, “Without there being anything in you to deserve it; without any cause on your part at all.” This is good news. God when He justifies takes the sinner as He finds him, waiting not for good feelings, duties done, love, sorrow, amendment, tears, prayers. He comes forward to originate all holiness in the heart of the person whom He has previously justified; but in justifying He has respect to nothing in you. All is done freely. Is this not a ray of hope penetrating your dungeon, through a chink in the prison door?

3. Your eye is on God. Startled by the last announcement, you take your eye off the sentence and off yourself but only that you may fix it on God, with whom you have to do in this matter. You say, in your despondency, “Even if I do not need merit, even if my guilt do not repel Him, yet where can there possibly exist any reason for His conferring this justification, so freely given, upon me? I can be of no advantage to Him. What, then, could ever induce Him to think of conferring it on me?”

Listen, my brother, “by his grace” is the next clause; and this means, “Out of His own free love.” He looks not into you, but into His own bosom, for reasons why He should take you as one of the sinners who is to be justified. It is grace that dictates His movements. He has love in His own heart unfathomable, and that love sends Him forth to such as you. Fix your eye, therefore, on that word, “by His grace,” and take courage. You may be “to the praise of the glory of His grace.” Is not this another bright ray of hope?

4. Your eye is on the Jaw. Suddenly you remember, “But He is a holy God and true; He cannot act contrary to His law and its sanctions, and I cannot meet that law’s demands. The obedience must be given, and the penalty for past disobedience paid, before ever God can honorably be at peace with me, or my own conscience feel satisfied and safe. Without this payment of what is due, the specter of obligations never met might haunt me even in the streets of New Jerusalem.” But stay, read the fourth clause, “through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

Grace has formed a channel for itself. The God of grace gave us a Mediator, a surety, a substitute. Jesus came to redeem, Himself obeying for us, and himself suffering unto death. The law spoke to Him, and He answered; the law exacted its demands on us from Him, and He satisfied them all. Turn hither, and see Jesus presenting to us sinners all which He thus accomplished, and bidding us use it all, as if we had in our own persons gone through it all. His redemption, His redeeming work, makes it a righteous thing with God to act in grace toward us. God may be said to come forward to you, brother, with the Jaw in one hand, and in the other with that law fulfilled.

What say you now? Is not this a brighter ray than before? Surely the prison door is opening?

5. But your eye is on the Savior, that you may discover your warrant to use His redemption. May I go? Many others go, but what entitles me? Only hear, “whom God has set forth a propitiation.” Jesus is a propitiation in every sense. He is the antitype of the mercy seat, which is called the propitiatory in the Greek; and He is antitype of every propitiatory sacrifice. A propitiation means something spoken or given or done or borne, by which the burning displeasure of a superior is calmed down and removed. That was a propitiation which Jacob sent to his brother Esau (Genesis 32:13-20) when he sent a present, and added words of submission and regard and kindness. And you see another instance of propitiation in the conduct of Abigail, at the time when David was breathing out revengeful indignation against Nabal. Abigail put herself to the trouble of going forth personally, in all her engaging beauty; she spoke words of confession and gentleness, falling at the feet of the offended one, and presenting loaves, corn, cakes of figs, provisions sufficient for every man’s need. Now, Christ thus came forth, when our God was most justly offended at our willful, flagrant, persevering violation of His holy law. What awakened soul is there that has not felt something of the awfulness of that anger, when crying in bitterness of spirit, “Rebuke me not in Thy wrath, neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure” (Psalms 38:1)? In these circumstances, we say, Christ came forth; He confessed our sins without reservation or palliation, and then laid down before the offended Father the reparation of the wrong done to His law, by His own obedience and suffering unto death. The Father’s displeasure passes away, and His countenance shines with unmingled goodwill and delight, when Jesus thus presents Himself before Him as the propitiation for sinners. Even as David’s brow relaxed into a smile of deeply complacent satisfaction, when Abigail, in her own person, laid her propitiation at his feet.

Now, notice well, that Christ is here said to be “held forth,” or proposed and held out to public view. The mercy seat is unveiled; every eye may look. The sacrifice is offered, and every sinner may come and use it. Nay, every eye ought to look, every sinner ought to come, for He is held out, or set forth on purpose. He is exhibited to all, like the brazen serpent; and woe to him who refuses to look! This is your warrant; there is no other ever given to any man, and there is need of no other. Will you not act as you do with the air you breathe? What is your warrant for inhaling it? Simply this, that it is poured round you as it is round all others, and your part is to draw it into your lungs in breathing. If you wait for a special, personal, individualizing warrant to use that air, before you will venture to inhale it, you must die! And your death will be suicide. And not less true is this in regard to your applying the Savior.

6. Your eye is on the supposed distance between you and Christ. You fancy some great difficulty as to your way of using the warrant to go to Him! How am I to come to Him? This wonderful passage answers your case here also.

“By faith in his blood” is the reply. You do not approach Christ by any bodily act, nor get any vision or sight of Him with your eye. But you hear what is declared concerning His blood, that is, concerning His having finished His atoning work by dying. You think on that, and you believe it; and in the act of believing it, you and Christ have met. Yes, in the moment of your simply believing what His blood, or His death, speaks to the soul, you have touched Him, and He has touched you. You have appropriated Him. You have used Him. On the spot where the soul believes what God says of Christ’s blood, God and that soul meet in peace. God ties salvation to your believing, not to

your doing, nor your feeling, nor your praying. The Holy Ghost persuades and enables you to believe that that work of the Substitute pleased the Father well. He makes you see the work done by Jesus, and be pleased with this way of reconciliation to God. And so, you trust, and find rest in Him.

Thus it is that “faith” links us to the redemption.

7. Your eye is on the righteousness of God. All else may be so far settled, but the tempter and your own suspicious heart conspire to ask, “But how would my salvation affect God’s character in the eyes of the universe? Would not His glory be obscured by taking such as I am into His presence forever?”

No: all this is done on very purpose “to declare his righteousness.” When you, a sinner, are justified in the manner already stated, that is, by faith in Jesus, Jesus and you are considered as having become one in the eye of the law; and so it is on the ground of your possessing that most perfect righteousness that you are saved. In the very act of thus saving you, God proclaims His love to righteousness. Your ruin, your perdition, your condemnation, would declare God’s hatred of sin; but your salvation will declare His love to righteousness.

Oh, marvelous salvation! We return home by a way all strewn with wonders. It is by one stupendous thought piled on another (so to speak) that we scale the heavenly mansions—“justified,” “freely,” “His grace,” “redemption in Christ Jesus,” “set forth as propitiation,” “faith in His blood,” “His righteousness!” O fellow sinner, when the day of the Lord comes, you will see two companies, each setting forth God’s righteousness—the one by wearing the bright robe conferred on them by the Lord Jesus, a righteousness brighter than angels’; but the other by being made to endure in their persons the infliction of the threatened curse. Make choice of the provided salvation. If the Holy Ghost carry home to your heart each of those seven words we have dwelt upon in this one passage, not a corner of your heart, not a crevice in your conscience, would be unsatisfied, unfilled. O brother, remember the true saying of Dr. Manton on his deathbed: “It is infinitely terrible to appear before God the judge of all, without the protection of the blood that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel.” Alas! In such an hour, your eye would turn sometimes to your sentence, sometimes to yourself, sometimes to God, sometimes to the law, sometimes to the Savior, sometimes to the gulf between Him and you, sometimes to the unalterable righteousness that frowns and will frown forever over you. These would be your “Mene, Mene, Tekel, Peres.” Why not this hour read, and rest on, this blessed and better handwriting, every word uttering hope, deliverance, security, salvation?

S. The Cup of Wrath

The Cup of Wrath By Andrew Bonar

"For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he pours out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them." Psalms 75:8.

It will help greatly to the right apprehension of this solemn subject, to notice that Christ is the speaker of these dreadful truths. They cannot, then, have been spoken harshly; they must have been uttered in all tenderness. As the head of His Church, Christ says (Psalms 75:1), "Unto You, O God, do we give thanks;" and then (Psalms 75:2), looking on a world lying in wickedness, He anticipates a different state of things before long: "I purpose when I shall receive the congregation that I shall judge uprightly." This shall be in the day when He returns to judge the earth. It is He, meanwhile, who upholds all by the word of His power; He keeps the world from falling into ruin; He it is that sustains that blue sky, as well as earths foundations, "I bear up the pillars thereof" —and were I to withhold my hand, all would tumble into ruin. Oh that an unthinking world would consider! Oh that fools would learn wisdom, and the proud would fall down before their Lord. For the Judge shall surely come, with the cup of red wine in His hand—a cup of wrath, of which every rebellious one must drink to the dregs. The horns of the wicked shall soon be laid low, and the righteous alone exalted (Psalms 9:10).

It is of this cup that we this day wish to speak to you. It gives an alarming, awakening view of our God and Savior. It is not "God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself," but God the Judge, Christ the Judge. It is not the King with the golden scepter, inviting all to draw near: it is the King risen up in wrath, in the evening of the day of grace, to "judge all the wicked of the earth." Oh there is a hell, an endless hell, awaiting the ungodly! The Judge warns us of it--in order that none of us may be cast into that tremendous woe. Say not in your hearts, "God is too loving and merciful ever to condemn a soul to such woe." If you continue in sin, you shall know too late that the Judge does condemn; not because He is not infinitely loving, but because your sin compels Him so to do. Listen to what is written, and you will see that surely, if unpardoned, he shall drink of this wine of God’s indignation.

I. The Cup of Wrath The general idea of the verse is, that there is wrath against sin to be manifested by God, which is dreadful beyond conception. As it is written in Ezekiel 18:4, "The soul that sins--it shall die;" and Psalms 7:11-13, "God is a righteous judge. He is angry with the wicked every day. If he does not relent, he will sharpen his sword; he will bend and string his bow. He has prepared his deadly weapons; he makes ready his flaming arrows." In Psalms 11:6-7, "He rains down blazing coals on the wicked, punishing them with burning sulfur and scorching winds. For the Lord is righteous, and he loves justice." In Psalms 21:9, "You shall make them as a fiery oven in the time of Your anger." In Romans 2:5 we read, You "treasures up unto yourself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;" and in Revelation 14:9-10, "If any man worships the beast, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out

without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of His holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb!" Can words be found more emphatic to express God's indignation at man's sin?

"For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he pours out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them." Psalms 75:8.

"A cup" is spoken of. A measured out portion. (Psalms 11:6 and Psalms 16:5, "The Lord is the portion of my cup"). It is frequently used to express a full amount; as when fulfillment of curse is called the "cup of trembling," (Isaiah 51:22); and in Ezekiel 23:31-33, wrath upon Samaria is, "the cup of Samaria."

God's wrath shall be given forth in a measured portion, deliberately and justly considered. There shall be nothing of caprice, nothing arbitrary, in God's judgment on sin--all shall be fairly adjusted. Here are the sins--there is the cup, of a size proportioned to the sin, and full. God's perfections direct and dictate the filling of it.

It is "a cup of red wine." He elsewhere calls it "The wine of my fury;" and Revelation 16:19, it is "Wine of the fierceness of His wrath." In the East, red wine was usually the strongest; but besides, the fiery nature of the contents is indicated by the color. This "red wine" is pressed out of the grapes by the divine attributes. It must be the concentrated essence of wrath; no weak potion, but one like that in Jeremiah 25:16, "When they drink it, they will stagger and go mad ;" or that in Ezekiel 23:32-33, "A cup large and deep; it will bring scorn and derision, for it holds so much. You will be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, the cup of ruin and desolation."

It is "full of mixture." This signifies that the wine's natural quality has been strengthened; its force has been intensified by various ingredients cast into it. Such is the sense of "mingled wine" in Isaiah 5:22, and in Proverbs 9:5, "Come... drink of the wine which I have mingled." We must distinguish this from the expression "without mixture," in Revelation 14:10, where the speaker means to say, that there is no infusion of water to weaken the strength of the wine. Here there is everything that may enhance the bitterness of the cup!

Let us ask, What may be these various ingredients? The body, as well as the soul, shall be steeped in never-ending anguish, amid the unceasing wretchedness of eternal exile and lonely imprisonment.

Further, each attribute of Godhead casts something into the cup! Righteousness is there, so that the rich man in hell (Luke 16:1-31) dare not hint that his torment is too great. Mercy and Love stand by and cast on it their ray, testifying that the sinner was dealt with in patience, and salvation placed within his reach. O the aggravation which this thought will lend to misery. Omnipotence contributes to it; the lost man in the hands of the Almighty is utterly helpless--as weak as a worm. Eternity is an ingredient, telling that this wrath endures as long as God lives! And truth is there, declaring that all this is what God spoke, and so cannot be altered without overturning His throne.

Yet more! While shame and contempt, and the consciousness of being disowned by every holy being, fiercely sting the soul, there are ingredients cast in by the sinner himself. His conscience asserts and attests that this woe is all deserved--and the man loathes himself! Memory recalls past

opportunities and times of hope despised. Sin goes on increasing, and passions rage; cravings gnaw the unsatisfied soul with eternal hunger.

It may be that every particular sin will contribute to the mixture—a woe for lusts gratified; a woe for every act of drunkenness, and every falsehood and dishonesty; a woe for every rejected invitation, and every threatening disregarded. Who can tell what more may be meant by the words: "Full of mixture!"

It has "dregs" in it. The dregs lie at the bottom, out of sight, but are the bitterest. Do these mean hidden woes not yet conceived of by any? Such as may be hinted at in the words, "Better he had never been born!" Such as Christ's woes seem to speak of. These shall be the reverse of the saved man's joys, "which never have entered the heart" to imagine! Backsliders seem sometimes to have begun to taste these dregs. But oh, the reality in the ages to come! For it shall be the wrath of Him whose breath makes the mountains smoke, and rocks earth to its center! O the staggering madness of despair!

"He pours out of the same. The wicked shall wring them out and drink them." They are not meant to be merely shown; this is not a cup whose contents shall only be exhibited and then withdrawn. No, the wicked must "drink them" and cannot refuse. When Socrates, the Athenian sage, was adjudged to drink the cup of poison, he was able to protest his innocence, and thus to abate the bitterness of the draught, though he took it as awarded by the laws of his country. Here, however, there shall be nothing like protest, nothing of such alleviation of the awful draught which the sinner must drink. "God pours out," and the guilty soul "shall wring out and drink" the very dregs. Job 27:22, says "They would gladly flee out of his hand," but cannot, for it is written, "God shall cast upon him and not spare." In Jeremiah 25:15-16, we have the Lord most peremptorily commanding, "Take from my hand this cup filled with the wine of my wrath and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. When they drink it, they will stagger and go mad." And further, He insists, Jeremiah 25:28, "But if they refuse to take the cup from your hand and drink, tell them, 'This is what the Lord Almighty says: You must drink it!" "They shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty" (Job 21:20). And what mean those words already quoted in Revelation 14:10-11? "They must drink the wine of God's wrath. It is poured out undiluted into God's cup of wrath. And they will be tormented with fire and burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. The smoke of their torment rises forever and ever, and they will have no relief day or night!"

It shall not, on God's part, be a mere silent feeling of indignation at sin; there must be infliction of curse. There is no thunder while the electricity sleeps in the cloud. The seven seals showed no deliverance for earth while unbroken; the seven trumpets summoned no avengers, until sounded; the seven vials brought down no judgment, while only held in the angels' hands. Ah yes, the penalty must be exacted--and it will require eternity to exact it all!

O fellow-sinner, we have tried to say somewhat of this doom; but what are words of man? You have seen a porous vessel, in which was fine flavored liquor; outside you tasted the moisture, and it gave a slight idea of what was within; but slight indeed. So our words today. And remember each new sin of yours will throw in more mixture! It is the merciful One Himself who speaks in Ezekiel 22:13-14: "Can your hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with you? I the Lord have spoken it and will do it." It is dreadful to read and hear this proclamation of wrath; but it is all given in order to compel us to flee from it.

II. The story of One who drank this cup to the dregs.

We would not leave you merely contemplating the terrors of that wrath. We go on, in connection with it, to speak of one whose history has a strange bearing on our case. There has been only One who has ever "drunk this cup to its dregs." Cain has been drinking it for 5,000 years and finds his punishment greater than he can bear, but has not come to the dregs. Judas had been drinking it for nearly 2000 years, often crying out with a groan that shakes hell, "Oh that I had never been born! Oh that I had never seen or heard of the Lord Jesus Christ!" But he has not reached the dregs. The fallen angels have not come near the dregs: for they have not arrived at the judgment of the Great Day. The only One who has taken, tasted, drunk, and wrung out the bitterest of the bitter dregs--has been the Judge Himself, the Lord Jesus! You know how often, when on earth, He spoke of it. "Are you able to drink the cup that I shall drink of?" (Matthew 20:22). "The cup which My Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11). In Psalms 88:15-17, "From my youth I have been afflicted and close to death; I have suffered your terrors and am in despair. Your wrath has swept over me; your terrors have destroyed me. All day long they surround me like a flood; they have completely engulfed me." The universe saw Him with it at His lips. It was our cup of trembling; the cup in which the wrath due to the "multitude which no man can number" was mingled. What wrath, what woe! A few drops made Him cry, "Now is my soul troubled!" In the garden, the sight of it wrung out the strange, mysterious words, "Sorrowful unto death!" though God-man, He staggered at what He saw, and went on trembling. Next day, on Calvary, He drank it all. I suppose the three hours of darkness may have been the time when He "was wringing out the dregs"; for then arose from His broken heart the wail that so appealed to the heart of the Father, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me!" As He ended the last drop, and cried out, "It is finished!" we may believe angels felt an inconceivable relief—and even the Father Himself! So tremendous was the wrath and curse!—the wrath and curse due to our sin. In all this, there was nothing too much. Love would protest against one drop too much; and never do you find God exceeding. Did He not hasten to stay Abraham’s hand when enough had been done on Moriah? and at that same spot again, David’s day, when Justice had sufficiently declared the sharpness of its two-edged sword, did He not again hasten to deliver, crying, "It is enough?" How much more then when it was His beloved Son? He sought from Him all that was needed by justice. And so we find in this transaction what may well be good news to us. For Jesus drank that cup as the substitute for "the great multitude," His innumerable people, given Him of the Father; and thereby freed them from ever tasting even one drop of that fierce wrath, that "cup of red wine, full of mixture," with its dregs, its unknown terrors. Now, this One, this only One, who so drank the whole, presents to the sinners of our world the emptied Cup—His own Cup emptied. He sends it round the world, calling on sinners to take it and offer it to the Father as satisfaction for their sins. Come, O fellow-sinner, grasp it and hold it up to God! Plead it, and you are acquitted.

Yes, if you are anxious at all to be saved and blessed, take up this emptied cup. However cold your heart, however dull your feelings, however slight your sorrow for sin, take this emptied cup. Your appeal to this emptied cup arrests judgment at once. Do not think you need to endure some anguish of soul, some great sorrow —to take some sips of the red wine, far less to taste its dregs, before you can be accepted. What thoughtless presumption! Imitating Christ in His atoning work! If Uzziah, the king, presenting incense when he ought to have let the priest do it for him, was smitten for his presumption, take care lest you be thrust away, if you presume to bring the fancied incense

of your sorrow and bitter tears. It is the emptied cup that is offered us, not the cup wet with our tears, or its purity dimmed by the breath of our prayers. Feelings of ours, graces of ours, can do nothing but cast a veil over the perfect merits of Christ.

Man of God who has used this cup, keep pleading it always. Ever make it the ground of your assurance of acceptance. Examine it often and well—see how God was glorified here, and how plentifully it illustrates and honors the claims of God’s righteousness. Full payment of every claim advanced by Justice is here; and so you, in using it, give good measure, pressed down and running over. What then remains but that you render thanks and take this salvation, often singing,— "Once it was mine, that cup of wrath, And Jesus drank it dry!"

What should ever hinder your triumphant joy? Be full of gratitude; and let this gratitude appear in your letting others know what it has done for you, and may do for them. For again we say to you, fellow-sinner, if you accept it not, soon you shall have no opportunity of choice. May I never see one of my people drinking this awful cup! May I never see it put into their hands! The groaning of a soul, dying in sin, is at times heard on this side of the veil, and it is the saddest and most haunting of all solemn and awful scenes; but what is that to the actual drinking of the cup, and wringing out the very dregs, that God "pours out of the same." Never may Satan have it in his power to upbraid you with having once had the offer of salvation, an offer never made to him! It seems to me that every Sabbath, especially the Lord takes Gospel-hearers aside into a quiet secluded nook, and there sets down before them the "cup of red wine, full of mixture," and then the emptied cup of Jesus, earnestly, most earnestly, most sincerely, most compassionately, pressing them to decide and be blessed. Men and brethren, never rest until the Holy Spirit has in your eye so glorified Christ who drank the cup, that you see in Him your salvation and God’s glory secured beyond controversy, beyond even Satan’s power to question or assail.

S. The Dialectic of Life and its Origin

The Dialectic of Life and its Origin TO some minds, origins are of little interest; facts are facts and let them be faced as such. To others an attempt: at the explanation of the origin of things can alone satisfy the heart and mind. They must not only know what thing does, but why and how it does it. And in the things of the Spirit my own mind was not set at rest until, greatly helped by some of the mighty seers and expositors of the ages, and always endeavouring to keep within the confines of God’s Word, some satisfying conception of origins was arrived at. It may well be controversial to some, difficult or unnecessary to others, even presumptuous to yet others, searching beyond where we need to search into the nature of "the eternal, immortal, invisible"; but it has helped me, and so, writing I trust in a spirit of reverence, I pass on this brief outline in the form of an appendix.1 The problem which immediately meets us at all times is the right understanding and handling of the opposing forces in our daily life; for it is obvious at every turn and corner alike, in things large and small, that we are faced with that which pulls in a wrong direction, stirs in us wrong feelings, frustrates, depresses, raises impossible barriers. The answer to such questions as how these things come to be, how they affect us as they do, what their uses are, and what are to be our reactions, gives us the absolutely necessary key to a continuous mastery over them; or, rather, to the proper and creative redirection of them; indeed, to making us see enemies as friends; for when all things and people, even oppositions and opposers, can be seen in a friendly light, the secret is ours.2

We must start at the beginning, although it may seem a long way back. We must start with the elemental power of choice, which is stimulated to action by the constant necessity of choosing between alternatives; then the fatefulness of choice, and the final fixation of choice in character and destiny. For here is the very substructure of life.

We find on analysis that the fundamental instinct of all life is desire, attraction to itself. In nature, the forces of gravity shew this; in physics, the unceasing attraction of the positive and negative particles of electricity, the protons and electrons which form the atom; or, at the other end of the scale, the power which maintains the solar system in equilibrium; all these have no different origin from the basic, all-governing instincts of selfpreservation, acquisition, achievement, propagation in man. All is desire. Desire is the primal energy of life. Desire in its perfected form of love is the foundation of God’s nature: "Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created"; "the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself."

Examine desire further and we learn this. Attraction, by its activity, brings into being its opposite, repulsion. Thus if I draw something towards me, although the nature of my desire is to attract, grasp, hold-a tightening, a hardening, immobilizing quality; yet the very fact of my drawing brings its opposite into activity, motion. Attraction causes a thing to move. But mobility is the opposite to the tightening, hardening, grasping of attraction: the nature of mobility is to go out from itself in outflow, output. Thus desire is seen to have a dual manifestation: at its heart is a conflict of equal but opposing forces, whose tension is the root of all manifested life. This is seen in the fact that all

life is the contrast, tension and interaction of opposites; thesis and antithesis which make the working synthesis: male and female, light and darkness, spirit and matter, and so on endlessly. Nothing shows this more clearly than the twentieth-century discovery of the composition of the atom, once thought to be like a minute and indestructible billiard ball, now known to consist of various numbers of electrons, negative particles of electricity, revolving at immense speed around a nucleus consisting of positive particles, protons. The quality of tension causes the rotation. The proton, the positive, attracts towards itself; the electron, the negative, attracts towards itself in the opposite direction: the tension between the two, being of equal force, resulting in the rotation of the one around the other. Such is the vast power of their attraction that particles knocked by collision out of the atom are known to travel at 45,000,000 miles an hour!3 The one phenomenon of attraction, repulsion and rotation is shown to be the structure of all visible things; every particle of matter, every chemical substance. And, in the spiritual realm, these same threefold qualities form the nature of self-hood, the structure of desire: to grasp, and its opposite, to give; to draw to oneself, and its opposite, to go out to others; and the tension and interaction between these opposites form what James calls, in a significant phrase, the whirling "wheel of nature ",4 the activity of all intelligent life. Now, it is at this point in selfconscious beings that choice takes the dominant position. Man stands in between these warring opposites of "get" and "give". Shall it be a constant raging, whirling struggle, first one in control and then the other? That is fallen nature with its endless restlessness and unsatisfied hunger. Or shall it be the yielding of the "get" instinct to the "give"? That is the nature of God reinstated in man by the Cross and the Spirit. For by that means the "get" nature is harmonized with the "give" nature, finding its pleasure (its "get"-instinct satisfied) in giving. That is the synthesis of the eternal nature. That is the Kingdom of heaven. But it ought to be noted that this separation in the self, these warring opposites of our nature, which can only be reconciled in Christ, were never meant to be known by us in conflict. In God, the Three-in-One, they have been unified from all eternity and are only seen in the glories and graces of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But we must remember that what is a derived selfhood in man and a created condition in matter has its origin in God. The idea that the world was created out of nothing is a myth exploded by the Bible itself. Thus it says of matter that "the visible was made out of the invisible";5 and of man that God created man in his own image and breathed His own breath into Him. The truth is that, each in their own measure, all creation has only one life in it, the life of God. All creatures are but God’s love compacted into material form. That driving-wheel of desire seen in man and matter is first of all the foundation of God’s own Being.

God is the Self from which all selves have come. All the tremendous forces that have created and conserved this universe issue from that one Self, the first quality of whose nature is this self-same desire. But God is not mere desire. His is sublimated, disciplined, desire. He is love. In Him, desire always has been but the raw material of love. The whirling wheel of self-hood has from everlasting been the hidden fuel; the driving force of the light and love and eternal self-giving of the Father of lights with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

We must speak as a man. We must divide the indivisible, describe the Infinite in finite terms in order to make the truth plain to our finite minds. We have already pointed to a basic selfnature in the Holy One which, as a fact, has never in a separate sense been manifest in Him. Only in the disruptive experience of man have this whirling wheel of anguish, these contrary forces, this naked self-hood, come to be known and felt; and, only to help man understand and readjust his chaotic

nature, do we trace this self back to its source in God. In doing so we take apart what never has been apart in Him, till Lucifer made the severance. For, in the Eternal Being, those elemental forces of His nature are eternally centred, integrated and yielded up to the love of the Son, the second Person of the Godhead, who has eternally dwelt in the bosom of the Father. We say again, we are dividing the indivisible; but to explain it in human language we would say it is as if the Father represents the eternal desire principle, the selfhood; the begetting of the Son is, as it were, the moment when the Father "chooses" to pour all the energies of His Being out from Himself into the love of another, thus begetting what we know as the kingdom of heaven, as love, service, selflessness, meekness, goodness, grace. It is as if we see a Cross in the very heart of eternity, when the Eternal One "dies" to Himself and "lives" to His Son. As if, at that moment, a self which could potentially become a kingdom of darkness and self-seeking, became eternally immersed, sublimated, resurrected into a realm of light and love, an eternal will to all goodness, centred around His Son. Such is a mere human figure of speech, for in reality Father and Son have been coexistent from everlasting, one in the other; there has been no moment of choice or moment of begetting, no dying to "self" and rising to "others", but rather an eternal, indivisible unity of being, Father and Son together in their eternal embrace revealing an eternal nature of love; and from them proceeding the Spirit, their Spirit, Father and Son proceeding forth in action, as framer and artificer of all the glories and marvels of the universe; the love which has its source in the Father-Son relationship, but which, to fulfil its love nature, must overflow and outflow as Spirit in endless forms of self-expression, all created of love and by love to participate in the endless blessings of the happy Trinity. An earthly symbol of the Three-in-One is fire, light and life. Fire, as seen in the sun, is the source of all life on this planet. By itself it is a terrible and consuming power. Infringe the laws of nature and approach too close to it, and pain and destruction are the penalty. Yet from this flaming source radiate all the marvels and beauties, colours and warmth of the meek and gentle light. No fire means no light. No light means no life on earth, for the light passes into all nature, quickens, sustains, gives colour and form to all things. To perform its life-giving function on the earth this trinity-in-unity must be in operation: the fire must burn, the light must shine, life must be quickened in plant and animal. But to earth dwellers the sun is never meant to be known and felt except by its blessings of light and warmth. The fire, as it were, is only known and mediated to us in its eternal begetting of the light. We recognize that flaming centre, we realize that it is the burning source of the light, but we know our rightful relationship to it; we gratefully bask in its blessings, but we keep our proper distance. The laws of fire and light and their effect on the human body are fixed and we wisely obey them. So it was meant to be when the Three-in-One first made created beings. They were to share in the kingdom of love by giving themselves to God; as Father is given to Son, and Son to Father, and Spirit to both. But first they must be selves, real selves, conscious of self-hood, conscious of those elemental forces inherent in their nature, derived by creation from the Father-self. Choice must be the deciding factor. As God, if we may so say, "chose" the way of love, the way of His eternal nature, so must His sons become fixed in the way of His Spirit by persistent choice. Desire, will, imagination, ambition, must be at work, the whirling wheel of nature.

Immediately then, there confronts them a fundamental selection of one of two ways, symbolized for Adam and Eve in a later creation by the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and the tree of life. By setting the will to the former, self chooses itself; the way of the kingdom of heaven by which all selves find full expression and satisfaction in the give and take of loving service, the

FatherSon-Spirit way, is spurned in its garments of meekness and humility; the glorious plan of the ages by which each self, each creature, is a happy vital unit in a vast organic whole, each a member of one universal body, a chord in the harmony of heaven, is shattered: and the self makes the dreadful plunge back into itself; it shall be "I will", not "God wills"; the drive of its own desires shall be its only master; it shall be its own god; its own great powers of mind and will and passion shall carve out its own destiny. Thus the circuit is snapped which joins it in bonds of love and unity with all creatures and the Creator. Two kingdoms have come into being, where there was only one. The kingdom of self, created to be only the hidden food and fuel of the kingdom of love, has made its separate appearance. An unknown monstrosity, named evil, has appeared on the stage. As a separate entity it had no original existence. At the dawn of creation, when the morning stars sang together, no such element was named or known. For it is a usurper, a thief. Our examination of it proves it to be misused, misapplied, good. That hidden self, having chosen to cut itself off from its source and its sphere of co-operative service, has come into the open as an independent, rival and antagonistic way of life. It will seek its own ends. It will satisfy its own lusts. It has powers of its own and will use them. It will be "free". It has formed a kingdom, a rebel realm. It is evil. But is it free? Look again at this kingdom of self. It is "the back parts" of God. It is the underlying forces which vitalize His love, joy and peace. It is the fire which begets the light. These same forces, this same fire has passed from the Father into His offspring, and formed their separate -and free selves; yet, though separate and distinct personalities, we are still, so far as our basic nature is concerned, in Him and part of Him: "In Him we live and move and have our being." Our selves still remain part of His one Self, and derive their natural life from Him. But in turning away from our natural destiny, we perform an unnatural act; we break the laws of eternal nature and we meet with the consequences of all broken law. Fire begets light. Infringe the laws of fire, plunge your hands into the blaze, the hot and fierce source of its blessings, and you receive not warmth and light, but burns and scars; blessings become cursings; gentleness, wrath.

Thus it is that the hidden kingdom of self-hood, the root and raw material of the kingdom of heaven, becomes the kingdom of darkness; all evil passions flourish in it, all discord and disease, all hatred, lust and cruelty. It is the kingdom of Lucifer and his fallen hosts. It is foreshadowing of that lake which burneth with fire for eve. and ever. These know God, not as "the meek and gentle light of heaven", but in His hidden fire-root into which they have unlawfully penetrated. They have plunged their hands in the fire, instead of basking in the light. To the froward He shows Himself froward. And here we find the true explanation of hell.

How often has the question disturbed thinking Christians. How can there be a hell? How can a God of love condemn men to a lake of fire? How reconcile wrath and mercy in the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? The answer is here given. The avenging fires of hell are a part of God, an inevitable part of His nature, for they are the very same fires which flame up in love in the heavenly kingdom. Never would they have been known or felt as fierce and hellish fires, had not Lucifer and his hosts, and then man through Lucifer’s deception, turned back from God’s light kingdom to His fire-kingdom. Natures that were made to live in union with the Father of lights in the beauties and blessings of the heavenlies had now chosen of their own free will to extinguish the light and plunge unlawfully into the dark fiery energies of the independent self-hood, only to find themselves in the resistless grip of their tormenting pride and wrath and passion, consumed of their own lusts yet never satisfied, in the unassuaged burnings of the whirling wheel of conflicting desire. Yet these

very tumults and ragings are still the movings of God in them, not God in mercy but God in wrath. All nature, whether of angels, devils (fallen angels), or men, is but a flame from the central fire and remains eternally fed from its burning source; but, to the merciful, He shows Himself merciful in the gentle fire of love; by the froward He is found to be froward, a consuming fire of wrath that burns in the pride and malice and rage of that distorted self-hood. Such is hell. As much a part of the inevitable nature of things as heaven; for hell and heaven are really the two sides of the one eternal element, the consuming life-fire which is God's nature, burning in love or burning in wrath, just according to which we immerse ourselves in.

God does not make hell. God only made heaven and all things to have the nature of heaven. Lucifer and his rebel followers, by breaking themselves off from the heavenly meekness and love, discovered for themselves the hidden and unknown fire-source of heaven's light, the burning wheel of the elemental self-nature of God. This now became their kingdom, their hell-fire, both in themselves and in their sphere of activity, the earth which they corrupted. A God of wrath and judgment, rage and fury, is all that they can know, a God of vengeance, of tempest, of destruction.

Hell has become now, not first a place, but a condition. Wherever the rebel-self dominates, there is hell; there are the burnings of God's wrath. Within, where the fires of anger, hate, malice, lust, rage in the soul, there is hell; without, where war, rapine, disease and death stalk abroad, there also is hell. All is still God's kingdom, all are still God's children; but it is the kingdom of God's anger, the children of God's wrath. With the wrath, on our earth, is mingled mercy, for this is still the day of probation and salvation. Two kingdoms strive within us and around, the realms of darkness and light. All things are compounded of mingled good and evil: if there are thorns, there are also flowers; if there is night, there is also day; if there are poisons, there are also health-giving foods. But the night cometh, the everlasting darkness in which the apostate angels already dwell, where no tokens of mercy mingle with the fruits of wrath, as on this earth; no sun, no flowers and fruits, no friendly and beautiful creatures: only the anguishing wheel of apostate, insatiable self-hood, the rage, the selfishness, the unassuaged passions of men and angels whose characters have become fixed as devils.

Such is hell in its final form; the eternal home carved out in the outer darkness by the free will of free beings, who preferred the kingdom of self to the kingdom of God, and persisted in their choice. It is God's hell? Yes, for all is God's. Is such a hell God's plan and will and making? A thousand times no. It is the rebel will of His creatures that brought hell into existence. It is the unlawful penetration into the realm of forces in God and His creatures which only exist for universal blessing, and the perversion of these forces to selfish ends: the consequence being harmony transformed into disharmony; peace into war; love into hate; joy into pain; the very ingredients of the hellish state.

Chapter 138

S. The Fear Nots of the Old and New Testament

The Fear Nots of the Old and New Testament.

[God's promises are all "Yea and Amen" in Christ Jesus. But let us see that we take them all from the hand of Jesus. Let the Owner of the Vineyard give us the grapes; let us not pick them as they hang over the wall. Is Christ yours? Then His promises are yours.] "Fear not, Abraham; I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." - Genesis 15:1. The first time in the Bible "FEAR NOT" occurs. It is spoken to a sinner who simply believed God when He told him of the Promised Seed. It is for thee, also, who believest in that Promised One.

"Fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is." - Genesis 21:17. The second time in the Bible "FEAR NOT" occurs. It is kindly spoken to one who had had shortly before a visit of the Angel of the Covenant (Genesis 16:10). Has He taken away thy great burden of sin? Then, "What aileth thee, Hagar? FEAR NOT" - He will order this providence for good.

"Fear not; for I am with thee, and will bless thee." - Genesis 26:24.

Spoken to Isaac, who had Abraham's God as his God. Hast thou annoyance from envious neighbours? If the God of Isaac is thine, this "FEAR NOT" is for thee. Thou shalt prosper.

"Fear not; your God and the God of your father hath given you treasure." - Genesis 43:23.

God removes our suspicious alarms, as Joseph did those of his brethren, here and in Genesis 50:19, by showing us that He has got full payment, and has thoughts of love towards us. Just as Boaz (Ruth 3:11) removed fear from Ruth, by telling what was in his heart ; and as David (1 Samuel 22:23) dispelled Abiathar's by declaring that now he had on his side one who would die sooner than see him injured.

"Fear not to go down into Egypt." - Genesis 46:3.

Spoken to Jacob, about to proceed on a journey, in his old age, under circumstances of anxiety. "I am God ; FEAR NOT !" This is enough for thee, who knowest by experience that thy God has saved thy soul.

"Fear ye not ; stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." - Exodus 14:13 To Israel at the Red Sea. Has God made the path of duty plain to thee? Then, hesitate not to trust Him to carry thee through it. Thy way will open out as thou advancest. How different the event when man, and not God, speaks ! Those that stood by Rachel, Genesis 35:17, like those who stood by Phinehas' daughter, 1 Samuel 4:20, said "FEAR NOT ;" yet death did come. And Jael met Sisera (Judges 4:18) with the same words ; but the end was death.

"Fear not ; for God is come to prove you that His fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not." - Exodus 20:20. At Sinai, when the people so felt the law and majesty of God as to cry out for a Mediator. Art thou feeling the same? Let it drive thee to the Mediator, Jesus, in whom thy sin is hidden, and from whom the Spirit of Holiness comes.

"Fear not : I am the First and the Last : I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold ! I am alive for evermore, Amen ; and have the keys of hell and of death." - Revelation 1:17. Do you ever think you must tremble as you enter within the vail? or when the Lord comes again in His glory? Fear not ! He will gently lay His hand on thee, put strength in thee, and show thee Himself - yes, Himself who died, and who liveth evermore for us ! Himself, who has thy name on His heart !

S. The Holy Spirit convincing

The Holy Spirit convincing.

'And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:'

John 16:8 NOTES OF AN ADDRESS GIVEN AT THE PERTH CONVENTION, 1883. Shall we not honour and bless and adore the Holy Spirit? Surely it might well be expected that our love, our adoring and grateful love, should go forth to Him to whom we owe so much; for every soul that has found the Saviour was brought to him by the Holy Spirit. Not one sinner, from Abel down to our day, accepted the atoning sacrifice till He opened their closed eyes to see their guilt, and the Saviour's grace. No sinner in the world cares to seek a Saviour till the Spirit awakens the conscience and guides him to the one great Remedy for sin. We might suppose that sinners could have no quietness or ease in their minds while in their natural state; but the contrary is awfully true. Most sinners have 'no bands' (Psalms 72:4), either in life or death; 'their strength is firm,' their sleep in sin is very deep, until the Spirit breathe on them. Their peace is an unreal peace; but still, it is true that they go on from day to day unconcerned about meeting the Holy One, except when startled by some flagrant act of transgression. Dr. Malan tells how he enjoyed 'an entire freedom from all misgiving' as to the future, and lived on 'in the uttermost repose of ignorance' up to the time of his conversion. I could tell of an infidel, outspoken and decided, who, within a few minutes of his death, held out his arm and asked a Christian neighbour to put his hand on his pulse that he might testify how calm and composed and fearless he was in the moment of dying. The truth is, all the world over, that such is the normal state of sinners; the world is in profound slumber and indifference as to sin. But from day to day the Holy Spirit goes forth 'into all the earth' (Revelation 5:6) awaking slumberers and rescuing them from Satan, who goes 'to and fro in the earth,' casting men into this deep sleep, and thus deceiving the whole world. The kind, patient, longsuffering love of the Spirit is infinitely wonderful. He works calmly, and (we may say) in self-hiding silence, willing to be unnoticed in His working. Are not calmness and silence the peculiar style of divinity?

'In silence mighty things are wrought - Each nightly star in silence burns, And every day in silence turns The axle of the earth.' So it was with the Spirit's mighty working in Creation; for Genesis 1:3 tells of His 'moving on the face of the waters,' a word which, as all writers agree, refers to the brooding of the mother-bird when patiently and in silence she sends forth penetrating warmth, instinct with life. And, as the grand result, what a world was disclosed when the Father and the Son bade light appear, and the wonders of the firmament, and the rich furnishings of the dry land, and the abundant increase of all kinds in the air and sea, till man, in the midst of Eden, crowned the whole. We are never to forget that the Spirit has been working silently, but most effectually, day after day. In the Courts of Israel's Sanctuary His emblem was yonder Laver, filled to the brim with pure, crystal water. Silently it gleamed in the bright sunshine, presenting to Israel the type of that Holy Spirit, whose it is to sanctify, bestowing quietly the holy purity of heaven. And at Christ's Baptism, when He ascended, was not His emblem the Dove ? - gentle, and still, and calm, like Him on whom He rested? And if anyone should suggest that Acts 2:2 is not all stillness, we must

carefully notice that properly the words read, 'Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a mighty breathing, borne along.' The word is the word for 'breath,' or 'breathing,' the same as Genesis 2:7, reminding us of Christ in the upper room (John 20:22), and of the mighty 'breath' (Ezekiel 37:9) that 'breathed upon the slain,' like the gentle breeze in a summer evening. But now we come to notice some of the things which Christ spoke concerning Him who so deserves our love and praise, and whose it is to accomplish such amazing changes in the hearts and lives of men. We shall dwell on that summary of His work given in John 16:7-11: 'If I depart, I will send Him unto you' - to you, My disciples. 'And when He is come (to you, My disciples) He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.' Here is a brief statement of His work in bringing sinners out of their state of nature into the kingdom of God.

(1) 'He will reprove the world of sin; because they believe not on Me.' The word reprove is an old English word which has the same meaning as convince (see Job 6:25; Psalms 50:21). The Spirit convinces, that is, He gives to the soul a sight and a sense of sin. Just as at the great day, in which Enoch's prophecy declares that the Lord as Judge will 'convince all that are ungodly of all their ungodly deeds and of all their hard speeches'; so now, when the Spirit comes into the soul He makes the sinner see and feel the tremendous evil of sin. The awakened sinner's judgment-day may be said to be when he sees and feels his guilt, and looks for deliverance to the very Lord against whom he has sinned. He sees and feels that his greatest sin by far has been, not believing on Christ - neglecting Him, rejecting Him, letting Him stand at the door knocking in vain, for months and years. Natural conscience never troubles a man in regard to this sin; the man fancies (if he thinks of it at all) that it is at most, a misfortune, and that himself is the only loser. But when the Spirit touches the conscience, the sinner's eyes are opened to see that this unbelief is the worst of sins, and the root-sin in his heart. The sharpest arrow shot into his conscience is the sense of this sin. For now he sees that Christ was more deeply wounded by this sin than by all other sins. 'Ye will not come to Me!' was the one only complaint He was heard uttering. As if He had said, 'I came to the gate of Eden, and opened it for you at the cost of infinite suffering, letting the flaming sword be sheathed in My soul. And yet ye would not come in! I rolled away the stone from the Well of Life, letting Myself be crushed and bruised and broken as I did it. And yet ye would not drink, nay, you hated Me because I brought this life to you, and told you that without this you must die' (John 8:24). It was (to compare great things with small) like the act of the Russian soldier, who, when approached by one who brought water for his thirst, and help for his wounds, thrust his deadly bayonet into his benefactor's heart. But more; the Spirit convinces the sinner that in thus refusing Christ he has struck at the heart of the Father. He has 'called God a liar, because he has not believed the record God has given of His Son' (1 John 5:10). The sinner disdained to listen to the Father, treating all He said about the Beloved Son as mere words without meaning, idle tales. And so he made God to be a LIAR! Who can tell the agony of a soul when first it discovers all this sin? In the Civil War it was not uncommon for such a scene to occur as the following. Two brothers go out to the battlefield, but on opposite sides. The battle begins; one brother takes his aim surely, and sees a young soldier in the enemy's ranks fall dead. He watches his opportunity, and triumphantly goes up to examine the foe whom he has struck dead. But see, his countenance changes! He is in an agony of grief! It was his own brother whose heart he pierced. Will the anguish of that moment ever be forgotten? Will it not haunt him to the grave? Even such the sinner's anguish when the discovery bursts upon him of what he has done in rejecting Christ. Like John Newton, he cries, 'I saw my sins His blood had spilt'; and he looks

round inquiring:

'Where shall my trembling soul be hid, For I the Lord have slain?' And then once more. The Spirit shows the sinner that by his unbelief he was all along virtually refusing to take pardon for his sins, thrusting the Saviour from him, and saying, 'Away with Him! Away with Him! Trouble me not!' He was resolving to go up to the judgment-seat with all his guilt upon him. And thus he was refusing peremptorily to part with his corruptions and his sinful nature; he was determining to remain unholy and impure, for there is no beginning of holiness until sin is pardoned.

Oh, what an abyss of evil is revealed to the sinner in the hour when the Spirit convinces him, as Christ says, 'of sin, because he believes not on Me!' No wonder the 3000 souls (men, women and children), on the day of Pentecost so cried out in fear and anguish of heart, when the Spirit, silently, but with almighty power, showed this sin of unbelief, and charged it home on each, while Peter pointed to the crucified Son of God.

(2) 'Of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more' (John 16:10).

Carrying on conversion-work, the Spirit does not stop at conviction of sin, but shows the awakened soul how that tremendous guilt of unbelief and all other sin may be taken away. In other words, He goes on to show where the sinner may find righteousness - may find all that will set him right with God against whom he has sinned.

Here also He works silently, but very powerfully. Go down to that river-side, and notice how Lydia is made to drop the filthy rags of devout self-righteousness while Paul is preaching Christ (Acts 16:14). Or, go to the way that leads to Gaza, and watch the scales fall from the eyes of that anxious Ethiopian, as he listens to Philip telling simply of the Lamb led to the slaughter (Acts 8:32, Acts 8:37). It is the Holy Spirit, and only He, who can persuade and enable a sinner to let go his rags and accept the best robe. It is only He who convinces a man that his righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, if he would cross the threshold and enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:20).

He carries the sinner away to Palestine and shows him One there who has come down from heaven to provide righteousness for sinners. It is Emmanuel, God in our nature, who, for thirty-years, lives for us and bears our burden. He lives (so to speak) over again, the life of Abel, the life of Enoch, the life of Noah, the life of Abraham, the life of all believers, in all ages, giving for them to God, an obedience as broad as the law, and as pure as the heart of God. He bears also, the penalty of our disobedience, the wrath of God, submitting to all that justice demanded, baring His whole human being to the infliction of the law's sentence, receiving the execution of Divine vengeance on sin in all the sensibilities of His human nature, and at last bowing His head in profound acquiescence. All was FINISHED. 'Finished!' was His own declaration; and on the third day, the Father reechoed that testimony by raising Him from the tomb in glory and honour and power. But over and over must the sure testimony be given, and it must be given in heaven, and so, on the fortieth day, you see Him with His eleven disciples, slowly climbing the Mount of Olives, in the afternoon. All is peace and delight as He talks with them, when suddenly He lifts His holy hands (they see on them the mark of the nails), and breathing blessing on them, begins to ascend to the Father. He has gone up to present, in person, His finished righteousness. If He is sent back to earth again, then the Father has not accepted the righteousness as entirely satisfying; but if 'ye

see Me no more' - if He is taken in at once and welcomed - then all is well. His righteousness, wrought out for us, has been accepted. And so He moved onward through the ranks of angels to the Father's Throne, and, as He drew near, Oh, the ineffable delight that shone forth from the Father, as He welcomed the Beloved Son. 'Sit down at My right hand!' was heard and seen by all the hosts of heaven; but His eleven disciples saw Him no more. Most surely then, the righteousness He wrought out for sinners has been accepted! There it is, that in the person of the God-Man, as Peter (2 Peter 1:1) writes, we find, 'The righteousness of Him who is God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.'

There was awful suspense that day at Derry, when the ship that was laden with relief for the beleagured city was approaching the boom; but oh, the shouts of joy when the chain yielded and the vessel sailed safely in! There was most anxious suspense when Esther passed into the presence of the king - will he hold out the Golden Sceptre? or shall she go forth rejected? And so, may we suppose among the hosts of heaven something like anxious emotion, at least, till the Father had spoken His infinite satisfaction, and then all was immeasurable delight. Now may men know where to find righteousness! Now may sinners be led by the Holy Spirit to Him, in believing on whom they find themselves clothed with beauty, the righteousness of God. For the Spirit shows the sinner that he becomes knit to, is united to, is one with that Saviour, the righteous One, the very moment he accepts Him as his Saviour. And so the sinner is taught by the Spirit to reason: 'If He and I are one, then His righteousness is mine, His merit is mine; I need no more for my justification than what I find in Him.' It was when the Spirit opened John Bunyan's eyes to see this truth, that he finally gained the victory over all his sore temptations. 'One day,' he says, 'as I was passing in the field, suddenly this sentence fell upon my soul, 'Thy righteousness is in Heaven,' and methought withal I saw with the eyes of my soul, Jesus Christ at God's right hand - there as my righteousness - so that wherever I was, or whatever I was doing, God could not say of me, 'He wants (does not have) My righteousness, for there it was before Him.' John Bunyan goes on to tell, 'I saw that the good frame of my heart could not make my righteousness better, nor yet the bad frame of my heart make my righteousness worse; for my righteousness was Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Now did my chains fall off - I was loosed from affliction and iron. My temptations also fled away.' From that day he reckoned all his own feelings, and all grace in himself, as of no consequence whatever, in his justification; a rich man cares nothing for cracked groats in his purse, for he has his trunk full of gold at home.

O, blessed Spirit, convince every anxious soul of righteousness!'

(3) 'Of judgment, because the Prince of this world is judged.'

One of the meanings of this word 'judgment' is a law-suit or cause to be adjudicated upon. In regard to the great cause on hand the Spirit will make all clear to you. Ever since the Fall, Satan has claimed this world as his; but Christ, the woman's seed, even Christ, came to dispute that claim on man's behalf. At the Cross He gained His cause, and Satan lost his. Satan was there 'judged' or doomed; pronounced to be an infamous usurper, who shall assuredly be cast out with all who are on his side.

Three different times does Christ call the devil by the name Prince of this World (John 12:31; John 14:30, and here). It seems to me very likely that our Master was wont, from time to time, to give His favoured disciples some notices of incidents in His history that were not public, and among the

rest He had related to them the story of the Temptation. He would tell how Satan, on that occasion, boldly and daringly, claimed all earth as his kingdom and property, 'all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, 'and had said, 'all this power and the glory of them, is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it' (Luke 4:6). And thus the disciples at once understood whom the Master meant, and why He called him the 'Prince of this World.' When the Holy Spirit comes to the sinner in His saving operations, He completes His work by causing the awakened and justified soul clearly to see that Satan, 'Prince of this World, 'is judged, doomed, damned, though for a short time still allowed to go to and fro on the earth. The sinner now clearly sees that to take the glory of the world - the goodly things of earth - as his portion, is to accept a gift from Satan and own him as Lord over us. The glory of the world - earth's grandeur, wealth, gaieties, pleasures, lusts, ungodly fashions, all belong to Satan, and he 'gives them to whomsoever he will.' But the Spirit teaches the awakened and justified sinner to shake himself loose from all that Satan thus offers as a bribe to retain his dominion over sinners. The man who delights in 'the glory of the world' as offered by Satan, is on Satan's side, and must be 'judged' with him. Very soon, all that 'fashion of the world' will 'pass away' (1 Corinthians 7:31), and 'the lust there-of' (1 John 2:17), swept into the bottomless pit with 'The Prince of this World' (see Revelation 18:14-24). And the time is at hand. And so the Holy Spirit separates us from the world lying in wickedness, and casts out of our hearts whatever is not of God. For now He Himself not only comes, but dwells in the soul, which He has 'convinced of sin, and righteousness, and judgment.'

People of God, you have thus learnt Christ. And we wish you to remember, that the Spirit dwelling in you will repeat oftentimes the first great lesson about sin, righteousness, and judgment. He will again and again renew His first operations, thereby keeping you ever decided and watchful and fervent for the Lord. And we seem justified in inferring from v. 7, 'come to you,' compared with v. 8, 'and when He is come (i.e., to you) He will convince the world' that it is His method, as a rule, in going forth to bring in more souls from the world, to begin by a fresh dealing with you who are already His. It was thus at Pentecost, and in all ages this has been His usual manner of working. Revivals begin with God's own people; the Holy Spirit touches their heart anew, and gives them new fervour and compassion, and zeal, new light and life, and when He has thus come to you, He next goes forth to the valley of dry bones. Is this the divine order? Oh, what responsibility it lays on the Church of God! You first, then the unsaved world! If you grieve Him away from yourselves or hinder His proffered visit, then the poor perishing world suffers sorely! But every time you welcome the Spirit, and again get blessing through His working in you, you may expect that He is on His way to save others. He fills the well to the brim, and then its waters flow over and make all green around.

He does not, we have said, work without you. So true is this that we might put the case in this startling form, viz., 'Without Me ye can do nothing,' says the Master; but He also says, 'And without you I can do nothing!' This is a very solemn truth for the Church of God. And at the same time it is a wonderful privilege that is involved in this truth, We are honoured to do what angels are not; saints are they who are sent in the footsteps of the Son of Man to seek and save the lost. Angels can only say (almost with envy), 'Go you, stand in the temple, and preach all the words of this life' (Acts 5:20); they themselves are not employed on this high errand.

Let us do far more than we have done. It has been often noticed that it is the overflow from the well that spreads verdure; it is what a man does for Christ and souls, over and above mere duty,

constrained not by law but by burning love, it is this that is blessed to the saving of souls. When the Spirit fills you thus, He has found a channel by which to flow out to others! When you cannot help doing more than you are strictly called to do, it seems as if then, He had 'come to you,' and were on His way to the world around you.

Chapter 140

S. The Hope of the Lord's Return

The Hope of the Lord’s Return. The Importance of the Doctrine of the Second Advent as a Motive and Help to Holiness.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE EDINBURGH CONFERENCE, 1888.

It would be very pleasant and instructive to hear brethren relate incidents connected with this blessed hope, and its effect upon the souls of God’s people. There are some very remarkable incidents. I may give a sample before going into Scriptural testimony to-day. There was among us, one who knew the whole truth in theory, and who had grace in his heart, but no joy, no assurance. He used to wonder why. Hearing a rumour that there was a good deal of talk in our congregation about the Second Coming of Christ, he said to one of our elders, "That’s a subject I never thought about." "Well," the elder said, "set about looking into it at any rate." He said he would. A few weeks after he came with his face beaming, and said, "I have not arrived yet at a conclusion as to whether you are right or wrong about the Premillennial Coming, but I will tell you what has happened. I have not any hesitation now, in saying, Jesus is mine, and I am His." "But," said the friend, "what connection has that with your study of this truth?" He said, "The connection is this; I got so interested about Christ personally that I forgot myself. When I was taken up with the Personal Saviour, I found all my doubts gone." I don’t remember whether he came to agree with us about the Premillennial Coming, for he left the place soon after. But was there not here a blessed lesson? The study of this subject brings us into direct contact at every point with the living Saviour.

I remember going to see a suffering believer - a great sufferer. I sat down and began to talk with her. "Are you wearying for the end of your sufferings?" The answer I got was this: "I am not wearying for death; I don’t care to think on death - it is an enemy; but, oh, if Christ would come! if Christ would come!" Was not that true spiritual instinct? We are not bidden wish to die, but we are a hundred times bidden to long for the Coming of the Lord.

Again, there was known to a great many of us, William Hewitson, a minister of Christ among us; and God, by him, did a great work in Madeira, where he laboured with Dr. Kalley. His biographer says that when the light of this truth broke in upon him it was like a second conversion, it so lifted him up. He used to say after that, that he had never before been able, as he now was, to rejoice in his work always. May I add something more? I was very glad to get a glimpse from Dr. Cumming, and another from Mr. Riddell, of how they came to enter into this view, and I believe at some of the prayer meetings there were other like hints dropped. May I tell you the history of some of us in Edinburgh? It is about sixty years since I myself felt the first thrill of interest in this subject - when Edward Irving was preaching in this city. He had lectures at seven in the morning during the time of the General Assembly, and for two or three years in succession, on prophetic subjects. We used to go at six in the morning to get a good seat. But I remember what led me to decision was the calm reading of Matthew 24:1-51. That chapter decided me on this subject. I could not see a foot-breadth of room for the Millennium before Christ comes in the clouds. It is wave upon wave of tribulation till the Son of Man appears. Our Professor in the Divinity Hall was Dr. Chalmers, and we

sometimes told him our thoughts on these subjects, and the opposition shown to us. He would most kindly say: "Oh, gentlemen, there is no harm in studying that subject; go on, and make up your mind. I have not arrived at a conclusion yet; I am looking into it"; and I am glad to say that before he died he ranged himself with the Premillennialists. From that date onward a little band of us began to set forth that truth. As for myself, I do not know that I have ever finished a Communion Service, from the day I was an ordained minister till now, without pointing the congregation to the Coming of the Lord, closing with that song of the Old Testament Church, looking through distant centuries, like Enoch, onward to the day of glory. Psalms 98:4-9. The cherishing of this blessed hope, instead of hindering our work, has all along kept us at work, caring comparatively little for the politics of earth. It has been like oil on the wheels, making us seek to abound in the work of the Lord. But it is time now, to come to the testimony of Scripture on this subject, "The importance of the doctrine of the blessed advent as a motive and help to holiness." We ought never to think that the mere holding of this truth will of itself raise any believer higher in holiness. There are many who do not hold this truth, and yet have outstripped those that have held it. But, at the same time, notice carefully that the germ of this blessed hope is in every believer. What is that germ? It is personal love to the Saviour; and you cannot have personal love to the Saviour without longing to see Him as He is. Oh, to see the head that was crowned with thorns, crowned with the crown wherewith He shall be crowned on the day of His espousals! It is written in Titus 2:12 - the grace that brings salvation teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, "looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. " Is it not plain that there must be an element of holiness wanting in that man who is not looking for this blessed hope? Some of our friends, indeed, very unfairly cast up to those who do not hold the Premillennial doctrine, that the last verse of Hebrews 9:28 bears a frowning aspect on their prospects because it reads that Christ was offered to bear the sins of many, "And unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." I have heard it said, "Ah, you see it is to them that look for Him: what will you do who are not expecting Him soon, in that case?" But the truth is, that all believers are looking for Him in their hearts, and the words really should be read thus, "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many (the multitude that no man can number, out of every kindred, and tongue, and nation, and people), and to them looking for Him the second time - " It is taken for granted that all who rest on His sacrifice are looking for Him, though differing as to the probable time of His arrival. But let us now show you, very rapidly, eighteen features of Christian life affected by this truth. We might multiply the number, but these eighteen we can rapidly glance at; and I will give them, as far as possible, in alphabetical order, so that you may more readily recall them.

(1) When the Holy Spirit by Paul, wished to awaken the Church at Rome to fresh energy, how does he write? (Romans 13:11-12), "Now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand." He does not say, "You have just a short time to live"; he does not say, "Death is coming"; he does not say, "The night is coming," but, "the Night is far spent," "Day is coming." Let the prospect of the day coming stimulate you.

(2) Again, when the Lord Jesus would strengthen us in confessing Him before men, He says that if you will confess Him before this adulterous and sinful generation, He will confess you before His

Father and the holy angels" (Mark 8:38). Why refer to the holy angels? He will say to the angels, "These are My people, who came through trials you never were exposed to. They had to conflict with enemies and cold-hearted friends, and they did confess Me before them all." He will appeal to His holy angels to be witnesses that they were faithful unto death, and are now ready to receive the crown of life.

(3) At another time, speaking of comfort under bereavement, notice the motive that is adduced. If we have been bereaved of Christian friends, many of us are content with saying to the bereaved, "Think of the happiness of your friends, to have entered into glory. " But it is remarkable that it is not this comfort we are recommended to offer to bereaved Christians. That cup has blessing and comfort in it, but it is not running over; and we are presented with another cup full to the very brim. Sorrow not as those that have no hope; for the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and them that sleep in Jesus shall come back with Him. "Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:18). In the thought of the Coming of the Lord there is a power to heal the wounds of bereavement that there is not in any other consolation.

(4) And how are we taught contentment with our daily lot? "Be patient, brethren, to the Coming of the Lord" (James 5:7). Be patient in the midst of all that might irritate and fret; be patient unto the Coming of the Lord. The husbandman has a long time of waiting till the seed sown appears above ground, and then he reaps the harvest; and we have given us the assurance that the very things that irritate and are apt to make us murmur and be discontented are seeds - if they are rightly used - of future joy. All these circumstances of trial are sowing the field with blessed seed, and in the day of the Lord we shall reap fruit from those very annoyances and vexations that are so apt to interfere with holiness.

(5) And how are we provoked to diligence in the Lord’s service? In 1 Corinthians 15:54-58, after giving us a wonderful glimpse of Resurrection glory, when death itself shall be swallowed up (death swallows us up now, but we shall see death swallowed up at the grave’s mouth on the Resurrection morning), the inference of unceasing, untiring diligence is drawn: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." It falls in with the parable in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, and Luke 19:13, where the Master gives His servants talents to trade with, and comes back and takes an account of them, and gives them their reward, "Occupy till I come:" trade with these till I return. You will hear more about the results when I come; but meanwhile, go on in diligent labour. But oh, take care of hiding your talent in a napkin. One day, travelling on the railway, as we passed along, a gentleman sitting beside me, said, "Do you know that place ?-" I said, "Yes," "I wonder if you knew a minister who was there many years ago? I was present at his deathbed. He was a good man, and a man that preached the truth; but he had one fault that marred I his usefulness, and he knew it, but had never overcome it. The thought of it brought over him a cloud in his sickness, which was dispelled only a few days before he died. And when, just before he died, his friend bent over him and said, ’In a few minutes you will hear Christ say - Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord,’ he gave a solemn, mournful look, and replied, ’He will not say to me, ’Well done, good and faithful servant,’ though I do expect to hear Him say, ’Son, thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace.’" Oh, brethren, why should we lose the higher reward? "Thou hast been faithful in a few things, enter into the joy of thy

Lord."

(6) But further still. In 2 Peter 3:11-14, holiness in all its details is enforced very powerfully by this motive. "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the Day of God." And look again to 1 John 3:3: "Every man " - every believer - "that hath this hope in Christ purifieth himself." "When He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is; and every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." See what a stimulus to inward purification this hope is! It speaks of every one - man or woman - that hath this hope in a Coming Christ, and of being made like Him - and if you are not purifying yourself you need not speak about holding this blessed hope - "every man" that has this hope, that has a real grasp of this hope, purifies himself. It necessarily leads to a holy life.

(7) We might enlarge on liberality and kindness, enforced by a reference to this same great truth. Instead of spreading grand feasts for your friends, laying out hundreds of pounds on grand entertainments, call in the poor and lame, the blind and the halt. They cannot recompense you, but ye shall be recompensed at the Resurrection of the just (Luke 14:14).

(8) But what is this? "Let your moderation be known unto all men; the Lord is at hand" (Php 4:5). The word translated "moderation" properly means "yieldingness." Instead of always insisting on our rights, it is Christ-like (see Matthew 17:25) to give up, for the sake of peace and brotherly love, what is not a matter of principle, though it may be a matter of convenience. If this yieldingness were known to all men, would it not prevent many an unhappy misunderstanding? There was a godly man, a man who used to speak lovingly to the careless around him, about their unsaved state, which they did not always take in good part. One day, being in poor health, he turned into a path which would have saved him, perhaps, a mile and a half of a walk in going home, but it was not a thoroughfare, though freely used by neighbours, and one whom he had reproved all at once angrily stopped him, bidding him go by the highway. For a moment he felt indignant, "But" (said he, in telling the incident afterwards), "I remembered what the Master’s rule was, and that soon all would be open to me, for ’the meek shall inherit the earth,’ and so I went another way." Was not this making his moderation known in prospect of the day of the Lord?

(9) We come to the grace of prayerfulness. Christ speaks of this in Luke 21:34-36, "As a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, and pray always." Our Lord’s parable of the widow and the unjust judge bears on this point specially; and probably, the lack of faith referred to there is very much a lack of prayerfulness; for Christ says, "Shall not God avenge His own elect, who cry day and night unto Him." Look to yourselves, believers; are you crying out day and night to God to avenge His cause, and to come and claim the inheritance for His own possession ? It is those who are crying day and night to Him that the Lord speaks of there; and that is a hint to us to see that we are among them - that we be like the widow.

(10) We pass on to patience and perseverance. What did our Lord say to His disciples? (Luke 22:28). "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations (trials), and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me; that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones, " - a reward for continuing steadfast under difficulties. You all know how Paul was able to apply this, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed" (Romans 8:18).

(11) But, hastening on, notice how even in the matter of coming to our rest, we are reminded of something else than rest at death. True, it is said, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours." But how remarkably does Paul write in 2 Thessalonians 1:7, Unto you who are troubled the Lord will give rest with us. When? "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels." The rest is there and then. We get a temporary rest when we leave the body; but the true rest, the essence of all Sabbaths, "the rest that remaineth for the people of God," is when the Lord Jesus comes again.

(12) It is then also, that "the reproach of His people shall be wiped away" (Isaiah 25:8; 1 Peter 4:13-14). When He comes to swallow up death in victory, "the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth."

(13) And all the real Reward and Recompense is not at death, but at the time so often spoken of, "I come quickly, and My reward is with Me" (Revelation 22:12). When looking forward to the finishing of his course, Paul thinks of his reward, but thinks of it in the future. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness" (2 Timothy 4:8). It is to be kept for him till that day. And Peter (1 Peter 5:4) bids us look forward to the same, "When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

(14) And full salvation is at that day, and not before that day. This fulness is a very interesting subject. That is the meaning of the passages read a little ago. He shall appear without sin to complete our salvation. Did you ever feel a little startled at hearing Paul tell that he, with all saints, groaned for the adoption ? - Waiting for the adoption? Are you not an adopted son, Paul? You said that you were a joint-heir "with Christ. " "Yes, " he says, "but I wait for my complete adoption; my adoption-dress - the resurrection of the body." Peter, too, bids those to whom he writes, "Gird up your loins, and hope for the grace that shall be brought unto you at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:13). There is a grace to be brought us then such as we shall not get till then. And hear this same apostle (1 Peter 4:14), speaking of being persecuted for righteousness sake. You need not make a great work about it; the Spirit of God rests on you now, And thereafter comes the grand issue, When His glory shall appear ye shall be glad with exceeding joy. The greatest joy of all is reserved for that time when His glory shall appear (1 Peter 4:13).

(15) On that day He will not forget your acts of self-denial. Every man who has forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for His name’s sake, shall receive an hundred-fold"; and Matthew 19:28 points to what this may mean, "In the Regeneration (Restitution of all things), when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

(16) If time permitted, it might be good to show how separation from the world is enforced by this consideration, very strongly and powerfully. In Php 3:18, Paul says, there are not a few professed disciples who are enemies of the Cross of Christ; for they indulge the flesh, minding earthly things instead of walking in the footsteps of the Lord. But our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, who shall change this vile body, and fashion it like unto His own glorious body. He uses this consideration as a motive for having nothing to do with the luxury and pleasures of the world.

(17) We hasten on, simply noticing how worldliness or love of the praise of men and earth's greatness, is counteracted by the blessed hope. In 2 Timothy 4:8, Paul reminds Timothy that the Lord Jesus will give a crown of righteousness to those who love His appearing; in contrast to Demas (2 Timothy 4:10) who turned aside, "having loved this present world."

(18) But we come to the last of the eighteen things (we might have added many more), Watching and Watchfulness. Notice Revelation 16:15, for it brings this down to the present day. When the kings are gathering to Armageddon, Christ cries to us, "Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments." Here we stand still, and ask the unsaved: What will you do in that hour?

"Should now the Lord, the King, appear, Like lightning's flash across the sky; His voice upon your startled ear, Would rouse a wild and bitter cry - 'The Bridegroom's come! We have no light, Oh rise, and give us of your oil;

We did but slumber in the night, And now He's come! O give us oil!

Give of your oil!' In vain, in vain, Your day is past - in vain you cry;

Those who are ready join the train, And meet the Bridegroom in the sky." As to you who are the wise virgins.

Perhaps the following historic incident may help you a little to conceive what may be your feeling when that voice is heard. When those who upheld the banner of the truth had almost lost heart, and Protestantism seemed failing, John Knox accepted the invitation from the true-hearted ones, and left Geneva for Scotland. When he did land, quick as lightning the news spread. The cry arose everywhere, "John Knox has come!" Edinburgh came rushing into the streets; the old and the young, the lordly and the low, were seen mingling together in delighted expectation. All business, all common pursuits, were forsaken. The priests and friars abandoned their altars and their masses, and looked out alarmed, or were seen standing by themselves, shunned like lepers. Studious men were roused from their books, mothers set down their infants and ran to enquire what had come to pass. Travellers suddenly mounted and sped into the country with the tidings, "John Knox has come!" At every cottage door the inmates stood and clustered, wondering, as horseman after horseman cried, "Knox has come." Barques departing from the harbour, bore up to each other at sea to tell the news. Shepherds heard the news as they watched their flocks on the hills. The warders in the Castle challenged the sound of quick feet approaching, and the challenge was answered, "John Knox has come!" The whole land was moved; the whole land was stirred with a new inspiration, and the hearts of enemies withered. If that was the effect of the sudden presence of a man like ourselves (a man whom we will rejoice to meet in the kingdom, but only a man), what will the land feel, what will Earth feel, when the news comes, "The Son of Man! the Son of Man! His sign has been seen in the heavens!" O, wise virgins, with what joy you will go out to meet Him! Meanwhile, what should our attitude be? Every day let us go again and look upon the blood of the atoning sacrifice, look till we find our hearts burn within us with longing to know the love that passes knowledge; the love that has height, and depth, and length, and breadth! Every day let us go to the shore, and standing on the shore of that ocean, look across to yonder throne - and the King!

He is coming, Himself wearing many crowns, but with crowns also for all that love His appearing.

S. The Jewish People

The Jewish People "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

Romans 1:16

Andrew Bonar had an early interest in the Jews. Being the people of God who generally had failed to see Jesus as the Messiah, they would have fascinated him on that account, but it is also likely that his interest and admiration for the older Scottish divines like Samuel Rutherford had an influence. Rutherford always spoke tenderly about the Jews as the 'elder' sister to the Church. There was also a movement of Zionism in the air. At age 19, in 1829, Andrew Bonar writes: "Visited the Jews' Synagogue. Interesting, and instructive too, to us who look upon their delusion with a better knowledge." This may sound arrogant, but he was so convinced, even before he felt himself saved, that Jesus Christ was the only way to God, that he always had a deep desire, born out of compassion, to show them the better way. It does not appear from his writings that he would have condoned the now increasingly popular view that Jews need no evangelisation.. His love for the Jews made him want to reach them instead, and support any missionary endeavour. When he went to Edinburgh for a while in 1837, after his work in Jedburgh, he writes: "Hope of seeing some Jews in the town." While he is there, the Committee of the Jewish Society make him their acting secretary.

He writes in April: "Have been with Mr. C., at whose house twelve of us were present to see how the Passover is kept by the Jews. Very illustrative of the Scripture. I felt something of the reality of the twelve disciples sitting down with Christ. Prayed and rejoiced in hope that something was doing here for the Jews. I think the cause of the Jews is one reason of my having been brought from Jedburgh here." In July: "Conversation with a Jew, Joseph Leo", and a week later: "Began this evening to instruct the Jew, who seems really anxious to know." In September he is in Liverpool, where he writes: "We this morning got into the synagogue, where I got opportunity of leaving a Jewish tract." In December of the same year he is much encouraged by a meeting: "...many men and two Jews, one lately come, Louis K■nigsberg."

During 1838 the proposed work among the Jews begins to take shape. In February he receives a letter from Mr. Wodrow "telling me that he was to present a memorial to the Presbytery about the Jews next Wednesday, and requesting the prayers of all the friends of Israel here for that object." Just over a week later he writes: "There seems to be now really interest excited among some of the ministers for the Jews. I regard this as a direct and memorable answer to prayer, and all the more that I have had no direct hand in the matter." At the end of the month there is more: "Heard yesterday more news about what the Glasgow Society mean to do for the Jews. Now there is hope of getting our cause brought forward here and in several other places, and even expectation that the General Assembly this very year may be brought to take it up." In March he attends a large prayer-meeting in Mr. Wodrow's house for the Jews. He also hears of a school in Bombay where 200 Jewish children were taught by Dr. Wilson, "by assistance of our societies." In May the Jewish

cause is to be brought forward in the Assembly of the Church of Scotland. He writes: "Prayed much in the morning for Israel. Saw in God's past doings, in regard to their cause among us, a most special answer to prayer, and encouragement to go forward, and remembered the promise, 'Blessed is he that blesseth thee.' So many ministers and people seem interested all at once. Went to the Assembly. It was the last part of their business, and was carried with much unanimity that a committee be appointed. Praise, praise! I hope now it will be said of us, 'Rejoice ye with Jerusalem;' our Church will be blessed in the joy of Zion."

Ten days later the Committee for the Jews is appointed, and he writes: "At the sermon last night was collected ■61." His talks with Joseph Leo during the year before are evidently successful, because in August the entry in his diary is: "Much helped. Thought and prayed for Joseph Leo, the Jew, who is to be baptized to-day in St.George's." Louis K■nigsberg is also baptized.

1839 brings a new direction. In February he is "somewhat unsettled by the occurrence of a proposal in Edinburgh to send Robert M'Cheyne and myself for six months to inquire about the Jews throughout the Continent of Europe and even round Jerusalem. The very thought of it, however, had the effect of making me feel more called upon to speak now with earnestness while at home."

It is of great importance to him to educate people about the Jews, and after he has been preaching in Kelso, he writes: "..addressed the Sabbath-school children about the Jews, which brought to my mind much the strange proposal now going on.....I am now able to pray that if this proposed mission be one that will effect anything I may be sent." Several weeks later he feels similarly: "Enabled to-day and last night to feel more closeness and reality in prayer for revival among my people, and in regard to the Jews." In March he hears that: "I am appointed along with M'Cheyne, Wodrow (whose place was later taken by Rev. Dr. Keith), and Dr.Black to go upon the expedition. I am giving this night wholly to prayer about this matter, its success, and my part in it." He then receives "the letter of the Committee requesting me to go to the Jews. It is a very solemn matter to me.....Spent the forenoon in prayer."

He is worried about his people, as he is by then minister in Collace. He says: "My people have no conscience of the duty of attending to the Jews...", but at the end of March the Presbytery gives him leave to go for six months. On 21st March he leaves to go on his journey, bound for France, Italy, Malta, Greece, Egypt, Palestine, Smyrna, Constantinople, Wallachia, Moldavia, Poland, Prussia and Germany. The "Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews", published the following year, gives a very interesting record of these travels. While he is away from his people, he sends pastoral letters, which Mr. Nairne of Dunsinnane reads to the people. On Friday November 22nd Andrew Bonar returns to Collace, and finds that at his next service the church is crowded with people wanting "to hear something about Jerusalem". At the meeting of the Presbytery at Perth in December, he is called to give a statement of the mission to the Jews, and in the same month he goes to Glasgow and Greenock to attend meetings for the Jews, "where I felt especially helped in preaching upon the subject." At the beginning of 1841 he mentions "I have been permitted to visit and preach in many more places than before, in this way experiencing the blessing of the Jewish cause." An important event happens on March 12th: "The day whereon the first missionary to Israel was ordained in Edinburgh. A memorable day for the Church." The Jews remain close to his heart. In August 1850 he writes: "Felt great sorrow at not having prayed for the Jews or spoken for

them in public to-day." For many years they are not mentioned in his diary, but when a new church is built in 1878 during his ministry in Glasgow, he has arranged that there is an inscription from Proverbs 11:1-31 in Hebrew above the door.

These words were put there to remind people of the reason for the existence of the church, and also in the hope that some Jews might see them, and come in to worship the God of Abraham. The Mildmay Mission to the Jews, led by Mr Wilkinson, decided to send the recently converted David Baron with James Adler to Scotland in 1881. Great blessing attended their mission, and a friendship was formed with Andrew Bonar. He wrote a letter to Mr. Wilkinson at the Mildmay Mission. (Information from 'David Baron, A Prince in Israel' by Ronnie McCracken) In 1882, on July 2nd, there is reason for joy : "In the evening baptized the Jew, Marcus Buck. I bless God that I have had this privilege in my ministry before its close."

Seven years later, on May 25th, 1889 he writes: "Yesterday evening at the General Assembly of our Church, that being the exact date of the time when, fifty years ago, the deputation to Palestine began their journey from Egypt to the Holy Land. Having been requested to be present and tell reminiscences of that time, I was helped in doing so. And then Dr. Saphir (see note below) spoke most profitably. I am the only survivor of the deputation, and very few of those that took much interest in the Jews at that time, are now alive. But how wonderfully the Lord has blessed this work! And how kind He has been to me in connection with it. 'O for a well-tuned harp!'"

Adolph Saphir was a Jewish Christian preacher who came to the Lord along with others, e.g. Alfred Edersheim, in response to the mission of five Scottish clergymen (including Andrew Bonar and Robert Murray McCheyne) who traveled across Europe in the first part of the 19th century, sharing Jesus with the Jewish communities they passed through. The lectures in the book below were originally addressed to Gentile believers and approached issues such as the nature of God's special people, His plans for them and Jewish evangelism. This book is a reflection of the early stages of the modern Messianic Movement in England.

'Christ and Israel' by Adolph Saphir , sold by Jews for Jesus

There is also a fascinating testimony of the conversion of Rabbi Leopold Cohn, D.D. in which he tells of Andrew Bonar and his congregation at Finnieston Church praying for him when he is baptized in Edinburgh. In the early 1890's, David Baron, together with C.A.Schonberger founded the Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel. From its very small beginnings in a rented room in the Whitechapel area of the east end of London it quickly rose to become one of the best known and most repected Jewish Missions in the world. In a short time the work spread throughout Europe and on to what was then called Palestine, encouraged all the while by the saintly Dr. Andrew Bonar who had become a devoted friend of the work. Indeed the great Andrew Bonar Memorial Mission to the Jews, held to mark the passing of that great man of God, was conducted by David Baron.

(Information from 'David Baron, A Prince in Israel' by Ronnie McCracken)

Chapter 142

S. The Leper drawing forth the Saviour's Grace

The Leper drawing forth the Saviour’s Grace.

"And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand and touched him, and saith unto him,I will, be thou clean. And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away, and saith unto him, see thou say nothing to any man; but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places. And they came to him from every quarter."

Mark 1:40-45. Our Lord was at this time sowing the seed of the kingdom in Galilee, visiting its towns and its villages. In the midst of a country village, or at the market-place of a larger town, he often stood among the people; the true Wisdom lifted up her voice (Proverbs 8:1, Proverbs 8:3), proclaiming life to the sons of men. On one of these occasions he was met by a leper; or rather, it seems, he was interrupted by the unexpected visit of a man all white with leprosy. The Evangelist Luke (Luke 5:12) speaks of the occurrence as taking place in one of the towns. If so, the case was altogether remarkable; for, according to the ancient law that shut out the leper from the camp, no one in that state was allowed to enter the gates of any city. Like the four unhappy men (2 Kings 7:3), the leprous person might come up to the gate, but must not enter. In the case before us, however, the man’s misery and earnestness appear to have led to a perilous experiment. Persuaded of the Lord’s power to heal, longing to put it to the test, almost sure, also, from rumours that had gone abroad, that his willingness might embrace such a case as his, the man will venture to do this new thing - he will come in all his leprosy into the city! He will rush along, and ere ever the angry people have had time to recover from their astonishment at the boldness of the leprous man, he hopes to find himself cured and whole at the feet of Jesus. There was both daring and doubting in his action. He is like Esther venturing into the presence of the king, ’If I perish, I perish.’

What a lively picture of a soul awakened to true anxiety for salvation! O to see many such in our day! O to see the ’kingdom of heaven thus taken by violence.’ The earnestness of the man is seen yet farther in his manner. He ’knelt’ before the Lord, and next ’fell on his face’ (Luke 5:12); his attitudes giving emphasis to his words. Even as our Master himself, when clothed with our leprosy, in the garden of Gethsemane, first fell on his knees before his Father, and then prostrate on his face as his agony increased.

He’besought’ Jesus - he addressed moving cries to him, and this was the burden of them all, ’IF THOU WILT, THOU CANST MAKE ME CLEAN!’ He has some fear, some doubt, some secret dread lest the Lord should see reasons for withholding the exercise of his power; but still he has great faith. He does not, like Martha, consider Christ’s power as needing to be sought from God (John 11:22); he believes the power to be lodged already in Christ’s person; he believes, too, it is

power so great, that it can reach his case. Yet, let it be remembered, up to this time, there had not occurred any case of leprosy cured. As yet, Jesus had not, so far as is recorded, healed any such. History, however, told of Namaan healed by miracle; and this man does not doubt but Jesus can work this miracle, if he will.

Brethren, if this man reasoned thus in himself, 'though Jesus has never yet done so great a thing as the cleansing of a leper, yet he has done enough to convince me that he can, if he will' - surely much more may every soul here say, 'if Jesus has saved souls as guilty as mine, then surely he can save me.'

There was in this leper's case an unhappy dimness of vision as to the Saviour's grace. 'Whether or not he has a heart that will go the length of taking up the case of one so unholy as I am, I know not' - this was the man's lingering suspicion. But the Lord Jesus had so much grace in his heart toward sinners, that, in spite of his doubt, he took up the man's case at once. 'Moved with compassion, he put forth his hand.' The word is, 'his bowels yearning, he put forth his hand.' It is remarkable how often we are told of our Master's compassion. In Matthew 15:32, at the sight of the multitude; in Matthew 20:34, looking at the blind men in vain rolling their eyeballs to find the sun ; in Luke 7:13, when he met the weeping widow of Nain at the gate. All who knew Jesus, knew and felt that he had bowels of mercies, and in this they could not fail to recognise the very character of Jehovah; 'the multitude of whose tender mercies' Psalms 51:1.) were the theme of David's song, and the hope of David's heart.

Jesus 'put out his hand and touched him.' He touched the leper. He was not afraid of being contaminated; he knew that no pollution would come from the man to him, but that, on the contrary, healing would go from him to the man. Christ is the fountain that cleanses others, and is itself never polluted. Christ can let John lean on his bosom, and in so doing can convey purity to John, while John communicates no stain to his Master. Though Jesus touched the leper, he did not, in so doing, break the Mosaic law; for the law forbade any contact with the defiled, only on the understanding that this contact would spread the defilement. But Christ's touch removed it, instead of receiving its contagion. Even as he ate with publicans and sinners, and yet broke no law of God; for he did so in order to draw them forth from their miry clay.

Jesus saith unto him, 'I will, be thou cleansed.' Our Master is as willing as he is able. He exhibits both qualities here in equal degree, and at one moment. It is with Divine brevity that he expresses himself, in the very style of him who could say, 'Let there be light.' But there is infinite fulness revealed by these simple words; for herein we see the heart and the hand of 'God manifest in flesh,' and find that the depth of his grace and the extent of his power are alike unsearchable.

'And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed.'

Here again is the finger of God. How characteristic of Godhead is this immediate effect! 'He speaks, and it is done.' Nothing is a barrier to the Lord's will and power. And hence it is that in pardon of sin the stamp of the Divine character is plainly seen in the sinner being at once and completely forgiven. A gradual pardon, or an incomplete pardon, would want altogether the mark and impress of a Divine original. Our Lord then 'straitly charged him' i. e. with authority, in the tone, of the Lawgiver - he charged the man as to his future conduct - he bade him tell none of his cure. 'Say nothing to any man.' Some people's own soul is greatly injured by their telling others what

they have experienced. Pride is often fed by this habit of speaking about themselves, and the individuals are drawn off from personal application. Neither this, nor any other passage, discountenances a believing man telling what God has done for his soul, if, by so doing, others are to be blessed, and God glorified. But this, and many other passages, guard us against the abuse of this matter. In the case of Jairus' daughter (5:43), the parents were not to tell the miracle, probably in order to punish Capernaum's unbelief, and the previous scorn of the multitude. In the case of the transfiguration, the three disciples were 'to tell no man till Christ was risen from the dead,' because, until then, the time was not suitable for revealing that special wonder. In another case (Matthew 16:20), the disciples were not to tell that 'Jesus was the Christ,' because at that time they were unfit to teach others regarding him, ignorant as they were of the necessity of his death. In the case before us, the man may have been charged to be silent only till he had visited the priest; and this visit was according to the law of Moses regarding leprosy. By that law, as laid down in Leviticus 14:2-32, the priest was publicly to proclaim the leper's cleansing; and in so doing in the present case, a 'testimony' would be borne to the reality of Christ's wondrous works. And then the mode in which the cleansing was made known was well fitted to send back the cleansed man's thoughts - to the Saviour. For the ceremonial rite observed in pronouncing one clean, was sprinkling him with blood of a bird killed over running water. This blood was dropt on the man from a living bird, that had been dipt therein, and that was let loose to fly at liberty. Our Lord, no doubt, loved that type well, for it so fully spoke of himself as the dying and yet the living one - his death and resurrection. The leper did not obey the command. In this he sinned. No doubt it might seem excusable to man for one so benefited to blaze abroad his benefactor's kindness. Men might say it was pardonable zeal. But illtimed and too forward zeal may be real sin. The man really, by so doing, misrepresented Christ, saying, in a manner, 'The Lord was not sincere in his charge; it was affected modesty.' O what a reproach to cast upon the uprightness of him whose love 'vaunted not itself, and was not puffed up.' And besides, by his mistaken zeal, he hindered Christ's public work, 'insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city.' Brethren, let the law of Christ direct us, while the love of Christ constrains us. And now let us fix our attention on two important views of our Lord which are both illustrated by this narrative.

I. The reality of Christ's sympathy in our sorrows.

There is real and intense pity for human misery in the heart of Jesus. It only waits for an occasion to shew itself. The leper's affliction gave such an opportunity. His beseeching cry touches the spring, and the door flies open. He rolls the stone from the well's mouth, and lets us see how deep and cool are the waters. He breaks the box of spikenard, and diffuses the fragrance on us. Blessed day in which this man probed the heart of our compassionate High Priest!

What, then, is there in Christ's heart? There is love to the needy, and tender pity to the helpless, sympathy for the sorrowful, and bowels of mercies for the miserable. This man came rushing into his presence in haste; his fellow-men shrank back from his touch, and ran aside at his approach. He kneels, falls prostrate, beseeches, spreads out his snow white hands, lifts up his sunk eye, draws attention to the disease that has made his whole person loathsome, and utters an imploring cry, 'Lord, if thou wilt thou canst!' I am driven off all shores now - is there a haven for me in Thee? The sight and the appeal moved Jesus. See how he feels for misery, He feels for the tears of the distressed who have no comforter. He often bends his ear to the prison-door to hear the groaning of the prisoner. He listens, and yearns over the moans of a sick-bed. He pities deeply the sorrows

of awakened souls. And his people's every affliction is felt by him. At this hour, Jesus has all this fellow-feeling; for it is still as true as ever, 'We have not an High Priest that cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities.' (Hebrews 4:15.) We should never read the gospel history, brethren, without remembering that most precious verse, 'Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, and to-day,and for ever.' (Hebrews 13:8.) 'Yesterday,' he was in Galilee healing the leper; and you see his heart then 'To-day,' he is at the Father's right hand; and you see his heart still. Yet a little while, and he shall come the second time to them that wait for him; and you learn what to expect of him on that day - 'the same for ever.' This compassion was called forth into exercise - brought out in acts - by misery being laid before him. As when they laid the palsied man, silently, at his feet. As when at Nain he saw the widow's tears. As at Bethany 'when he saw Mary weeping.' Therefore let us lay before him our distress and trouble. Let us open out our wounds in the physician's presence, 'Lord, here is my sore;' and, 'Lord, here is my perpetual pain, and my incurable wound.' Do this by special, particular, minute, confession of sin; or by definite and full declaration of sorrows. It is thus you draw off the bandage and shew the ghastly sore, and move the pity, and draw forth the skill of Jesus. You may object: 'Of what use in our doing so? He knows our sorrows already?' True; but our High Priest - our brother - uses human rules, so to speak, in this matter. It was his own way on earth; he unbosomed all he felt to his Father, and he desires us to do the same.

It is not because he is slow to feel. No; he is easily touched. The leper's case is stated, and 'immediately he puts forth his hand.' Peter begins to sink in the water; and forthwith Jesus stretches out his hand. Jairus tells the sorrows of a father's heart; and scarcely has he got to the end of his tale, ere Jesus arises and goes with him. All this shews that he has a full heart of tender pity. He is, indeed, far, far more easily moved than we; just because no sin ever blunts his feelings, or introduces selfish regard into his calculations. His holy, loving soul hastens to relieve a suppliant's pain.

Some never really shew Christ their disease - their sorrow - their wretchedness. Chagrin, or the sorrow of the world, works their ruin.

O unhappy one, whom the world hath deceived, and who feedest proudly on thy very wretchedness, unbosom all to our High Priest, and find his flowing compassion thy cure. O suffering ones, try these deep compassions. 'As one whom his mother comforteth, so the Lord thy God would comfort thee.' It is thus that his own have always been upheld and refreshed. Such is the character of Him who is our physician.

II. The manner in which Christ heals our soul's diseases.

Very many narratives in Scripture appear to have been inserted there because of their peculiar fitness to illustrate spiritual truth and the ways of God. Thus David's cave of Adullam; and David's interview with Mephibosheth, whom he pardoned for Jonathan's sake; and the Queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon; and Jeremiah's drawn up from the miry clay of his dungeon. But especially may we say this of a narrative like this before us, wherein the disease is leprosy, which all agree is remarkably typical of sin, and wherein the healer is Jesus. We have no doubt this man's case was meant to teach us the sinner's mode of coming to the Saviour for pardon.

Keeping in mind, then, that leprosy shewed the nature of sin, here is represented a sinner of the most loathsome kind, laden with deadly sin, from head to foot polluted. Feeling and thoughts,

words and actions, have all been evil, and only evil. Next, there is here represented this great sinner sensible of his case, awakened to deep concern under it. Nature awakens concern in the diseased for a cure, and leads him to a physician; and the Holy Spirit awakens concern in the sinner, and turns his joy into mourning until he has found a remedy, directing him where to go, and opening his heart to embrace the Saviour revealed to him. Now here are such a man's difficulties in seeking the Saviour; here are exhibited such a man's enquiries when he has come so far as to feel that he must find a Saviour or perish. Here is that man's case set before us in the anxious moments he spends ere the scales have for ever fallen from his eyes, and the fulness of the grace of a forgiving God been discovered. The man comes to none other but the Lord Jesus. And what was the warrant that emboldened him so to come? All the warrant lay in the Lord himself, what he had heard of his works, and what he knew of his character. And such is our warrant for coming as sinners, as ungodly, as lost, as unjust, as unclean, as desperately wicked, to the Lord our Righteousness. We find nothing in our own hearts or lives to warrant a single hope; but we hear of the Lord, that 'they who know his name, put their trust in him.' We hear that there is boldness found by 'the blood of Jesus,' and by the fact that himself also is 'the High Priest over the house of God' - and so his work and his living person put into our hands an ample warrant for a bold approach. This warrant, when held even by a trembling hand, avails - Christ's work and person, seen even by a dim eye - the blood and the High Priest, alone trusted in even by a fearful heart, bring us into the Lord's presence, and within touch of the golden sceptre. The leper's heart had still a lingering suspicion, 'If thou wilt;' but then it did at the same time repose confidence on him so far as it knew his mind. He did believe the fountain to be deep and wide, able to give out much; and approaching it thus, he was made by the Lord to know to his blessed astonishment; that not only was it deep and full, but full to the very brim. Jesus at once hasted to say, 'I will; be clean,' putting the man at the very edge of the fountain, and laving him with its waters.

We sometimes think that we believe Jesus able to pardon and save, but we are not sure that he is willing to go so far as to save us. For the lurking suspicion in such cases is, that there is about us an unworthiness that will in all likelihood repel him from us. But this is a misunderstanding, a gross misconception of Christ's reasons for saving any. His grace is misrepresented by such a thought; and did we see how he pardons solely for reasons in himself, not for any cause in us, we would be delivered from this hinderance. Jesus here removes this very fear; for so great is his grace, that even doubts of himself are swept away by it. Nor is there any price paid for pardon, even as the leper's case was all free. He came to get; he never once thought of offering a gift in any shape. It was well known that Jesus did all his wonders without inducement on the part of the receivers. The man went feeling, 'He gives, and I need to get.' And so it was, Christ gave, and the leper received - not a word of conditions, not a word even as to duty, until the case was perfected. And thus it is with pardon of sin. The coming sinner's appeal to Christ - his simple confidence in him for pardon - is responded to by an immediate bestowal of forgiveness. The Lord has not to go and fetch the gift; nor has he to bid the applicant go and return again; or go and abide many days in patient hope. The pardon is in Christ, who at once says, 'I will.' But perhaps you object, 'But there is something like a price, for we must have faith in him ?' But is this a price? Was the leper's coming to Christ a price? In fact, faith, so far from being a price, is the soul's believing that it is saved without a price.

You may say that you have often tried to get to Christ, and have often prayed. Well, but all the time you may have never searched his heart. You may have thought of 'Thou canst,' but very little of 'I will.' You are still a stranger to the joy of believing his present readiness, and his present power. You have not been aware, that instead of bringing a price to him - e.g. excited feelings, bitter repentance, humiliation - he has on his part been ready all along to give an immediate pardon, whenever he saw it could be done in a way honourable to himself, - that is, you were content to receive it without a single qualification on your part at all.

Brethren, who of you is this day as the leper? The fear of man has no influence on you now to keep you back; you could face a whole city in your search for a cure. But you have still some unsatisfied doubts. These doubts are no honour to Christ; they are no blessing to yourself. The Holy Spirit, in savingly revealing Christ to any soul, removes them altogether. A Saviour better known would satisfy them. Though no case so bad, or at least so peculiar as yours, had ever occurred before, yet he can reach it with his holy skill. The sinner that believes 'Thou canst,' might surely look a little farther and see that also written on his heart, 'I will.'

Survey his person. See the priest's robe, the priest's girdle, the priest's mitre, the priest's breastplate, with its row of names, each name telling of a man of Israel, to whom the Prince and Saviour gave repentance and remission. See the palms of his hands, on which are engraven the names of Rahab and Manasseh, and thousand, thousand lepers cleansed and glorified. To such a Saviour you may go: go even with doubts; for you may go to hide them all in his pierced side, as Thomas did. Carry doubts, which form so great a part of your misery, to this compassionate Saviour. 'He can, and he will,' let this henceforth be your song, as you run your race with your eye fixed on his person.

S. The Love of the Father

The Love of the Father.

'For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.'

John 6:38-40.

None of the Evangelists or Apostles speak so much of the Father as John, who knew most of his Son Jesus Christ, and leant upon his bosom. The reason is, John felt that the mind of the Father and the mind of the Son were the same - entirely the same. He was; therefore, engaged in the same topic when he unfolded the Father's love.

It is remarkable that it is this apostle who records what Jesus revealed concerning the Father, and how Jesus delighted to point his disciples to him. Thus, he shows us in the context, John 6:37, that Jesus went into the secret of his pavilion when his soul was grieved by the perverse unbelief of men. In that hour, when Jesus could find no refreshment in the men around him, he turned back for a moment's joy to the Father's love. 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me!' He bathes his soul in that depth of eternal love. He surveys those given to him - Abel, and the saints of his age - Abraham, and his faithful ones - Peter, John, Mary, Lydia - the few in Sardis - the souls under the altar - and, as he surveys them, he sees his Father's love sparkle from each one, for these are his Father's gift; and forthwith his own love overflows on all that stand by. He flashes out his own love when he in the same moment cries, 'And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.' It seems that in that hour he thought upon the future. He saw, as he uttered the words, 'All whom the Father giveth me,' how man would be prone to take this reference to the Father's love as indicating a difference between the grace of the Father and of the Son. He saw that many would say, that Jesus damped the rising hope of the coming sinner when he said, 'All that the Father giveth me,' and therefore does he forthwith cast out that other cord of love, 'And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.' So great is my Father's love to me and to perishing men, that assuredly there shall be souls that come to me; and so great is my love and his love alike, that no coming one shall on any account be cast out.

Dear brethren, if the snow had never lain on the tops of Lebanon, Jordan would never have been full or overflowing. There would have been no Saviour's grace for man to know and feel, if the Father had not 'so loved the world' as to give us his only begotten. Yet often is the Father's love suspected or forgotten, although he is the fountain-head, and all the streams of grace have had their source in him. 'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.' James 1:17 brethren, we should love him as Jesus did. Come and see what wondrous reason there is why we should do so.

I. The Father’s amazing love appears in his sparing this guilty world, though he spared not the angels that sinned. - You know that it is the Father’s part to arrange, and purpose, and decree - it is his to decide and appoint whatsoever cometh to pass. Now, in a past eternity, he had the case of this fallen world under consideration. He might have decreed immediate woe as soon as sin should be committed by men. For sin deserves not only eternal, but immediate curse; and he had seen meet so to determine in regard to those angels who should leave ’their first habitation.’ But the barren fig-tree was spared - this most guilty world received a day of grace. It became the very theatre for the display of long-suffering; so that our text exhibits to us the Son of God walking on a spared world, digging at the roots of its barren trees. ’Herein is love !’ For to spare this whole world for a time, implied the intention of enduring man’s rebellion and man’s unceasing provocations, for at least six thousand years. It was equivalent to the Father saying, ’Lo! I will submit to bear man’s apostacy - to allow him to provoke the eyes of my glory - to wag his head at me and say, ’Can he see through the dark cloud ’?’ - to cast up mire and the very filth of hell upon my pure white throne - nay, to aim at ’erasing my love from my own heart, and even strike at my own being !’ O did it not require love ineffable ere this could be resolved upon! This guilty world’s day of grace is a most marvellous proof and manifestation of Jehovah’s depth of love. And, thou wicked and slothful servant, who sayest, ’He is an austere master,’ shalt be confounded for ever. The Father needs do no more than point to this time of most undeserved long-suffering. You speak of mercy; and some of you say, He could not be a God of mercy if be cast away so many souls; but already has his treatment of you displayed his mercy. Your day of grace proves him to be a loving God. 0 man, see to it before you are summoned to the Judgment Seat; for your plea, drawn from his mercy, is already dismissed. ’What will you do in the day of visitation ?’ You abuse your day - you sit down to eat and drink and rise up to play - you dance before your golden calf - and then complain of a long-suffering God, because his mercy bears with you only for a lifetime, and will not wink at your sin to all eternity!

II. The Father’s amazing love appears in choosing some of this guilty world, who should certainly be to the praise of his glory. - Our text refers to this in the expression, ’All that the Father hath given me.’ And so at other times - ’ Thou gavest them me,’ John 17:6; and ’The men whom thou hast given me;’ ’Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, having predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.’ Ephesians 1:5-6.

Now, there was a mystery of love in this election. It lies in the fact that, but for this further determination of the Father, none of our world would after all have been saved. To give men full liberty to come and be saved is love indeed. To procure and provide a ransom available for all who do come, whatever they be, is love yet higher still. But love can ascend to a height beyond this - far beyond it. It has ascended infinitely higher, for it has resolved to draw many, many thousands to itself, who otherwise would not have come at all. The Lord saw, dear brethren, that none in all this world would have come - not one shipwrecked man would ever have swam to shore, for he hated the shore more than the very waves that lashed him. No manslayer would have crossed the threshold of the city of refuge; he would rather linger in the open plain and risk the blow of the avenger. No debtor would have deigned to accept the payment - no captive to receive the ransom; even though all was free - even though entreated to do so by God himself - even though hell was

behind, and heaven before. The world's corruption was deep beyond conception. Earth was an open sepulchre; and each man hated his God. It was in reference to what he saw of this fearful enmity that Jesus said, in melancholy pity, 'No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.' John 6:44. They are so totally depraved, they are so wedded to their lusts, they are so gross, and sensual - so truly dead in sin - they do not wish to be freed from their covetousness, their envy, their lust, their power to draw draughts of pleasure from ungodly revelry, or from intense engrossment with the lawful occupations of life. They hide among the trees of the garden at the first sound of the voice of the Lord, even when he comes with grace on his lips, and goodwill to men in his heart.

O brethren, to be able to love any of such a race, argues strange and mysterious depth of love in God the Father. And he did fix his love on many of these; he did it freely, and he did it determinedly. So deliberate, decided, determined was this eternal love of the Father, that it made success certain in the case of each on whom it was fixed. It was such a love, that its plans and purposes implied the operation of each person of the Godhead. The Spirit must go forth and draw, and the Son go forth and die. This was the Father's plan! O what amazing love is here! What thoughts are in his heart to usward! He will not let go his purpose of having some of our fallen race standing round his throne.

1. Anxious souls! Surely the God that would do this from all eternity, is a God of infinite grace. What a bosom is this to lean upon what an inducement to draw near! Does it not confirm you in the belief of that declaration, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out !' He who makes such provision to ensure that many shall come, is one who will in nowise reject any that are coming!

2. Unawakened men! There is nothing in the character of God that can account for your treatment of him ; - there is nothing in him or his ways that can excuse your hatred. It is the fearful depravity of your own souls that alone can account for your utter ungodliness. Your blood is on your own heads! Your heart may be as deceitful as it is wicked, so that you may not believe your own deplorable state of enmity; but Jehovah has said by the lips of his Son concerning all that thus resist him, 'Ye have hated me without a cause!'

III. The Father's amazing love appears in his giving Christ to be the sinner's way of salvation. - It was he who made a new and living way for a sinner's return to him. 'This is the will of him that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life ;' verse 40. 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish ;' John 3:16. And hence the name given him in 2 Corinthians 1:3, 'The Father of mercies ;' and in Romans 8:32, 'He that spared not his Son.' Had he for once caused one ray of the inaccessible light to shoot down to this earth in order to teach us our state of darkness - had he shown us one crown worn above, or one triumphal palm - had he caused us to hear one note of heavenly melody - all this would have left us inexcusable, if we did not ever after covet earnestly the things above. But he took the best gift in all his treasures; nay, he took the Son that was in his bosom, and gave him to man. Angels saw it done, and rapturously sang, 'To you is born a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord !' and all men that have had anointed eyes have responded as they gazed, 'To us a child is born unto us a son is given!' It is by this measuring-line that you must fathom the depth of the ocean. It is by this fact that you must try to measure the unsearchable love of the Father. You test your fellow-creatures' love by the sacrifices they would make for you. You judge

of Abraham's love to his God by his sacrifice of Isaac. Now judge of the love of the Father by his gift of his Son.

It was the Father saying, 'I cannot give up my law and my holiness for that would be ceasing to be God. I cannot hide my righteousness and resign its demands; for that would ruin all. I cannot put the burden on my angels; for they could not bear it one hour. I cannot leave it on man; for then, not one of them should ever stand before me. But this is my will. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd; let man be dipt in the blood of the Almighty's fellow !' He not only gave him, but substituted him in the room of the guilty - 'the just for the unjust to bring us unto God.'

O brethren, the Father resolved that all salvation shall be found in the Son. He carefully avoided leaving any of the details of salvation for us to perform. The Father was he who provided that the chastisement of our peace should be laid upon another; and no atoning tears left for us to shed - no atoning suffering left for us to endure - not one atoning sigh left for us to heave. Therefore, 'it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he put him to grief' Isaiah 53:10; and this he did with such calm, decided love, that the appeal of his beloved Son to him, 'Father if it be possible, let this cup pass,' served only to manifest his long-settled and unchanging plan.

He had resolved that he should have children and sons from among men; but he had further resolved, that their way of becoming his children and sons should all express his love. It was to be free; they were to come to him from the far country 'in a chariot paved with love.' All he asked of them was, that they should ascend the chariot and be carried home; for as many as received Jesus were at once to receive the privilege of sons of God. 'Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called sons of God,' John 3:1; but equally amazing that we should become sons in a way so free. It costs Jesus all; it costs us nothing. Every drop of the vial falls on Jesus, and not even the dregs are left. Every arrow that was needed to express the Lord's hatred of sin and vindicate his law, sinks into the heart of Jesus, and is aimed at him by the Father's hand! All penalties are exacted of him; all obedience is rendered by him; and all this is done according to, and in exact fulfilment of, the Father's purpose of love to us. These are just the thoughts of the Father toward us, carried out into accomplishment.

Now, brethren, the Father, having given us this way and warrant for coming to him, manifests his love yet more by shutting you up to the necessity of taking this one way, this only warrant. 'Every one that hath heard and learnt of the Father cometh unto me,' John 6:45, said Jesus; and 'no man cometh unto the Father but by me,' John 14:6. You are reduced to the necessity of being saved by a free salvation. It is written, 'Him hath God the Father sealed ;' John 6:27. He has made Jesus to be your Joseph; he has given him the royal signet. When you cry for bread, he says to all, 'Go to Joseph;' Genesis 41:55. Jesus has the seal of the Father. O with such a warrant, and going to one whose love is such that it planned this way, one whose bosom is filled with calm, determined, eternal love, can you hesitate as to duty? Can you hesitate as to the way of safety? Nothing but enmity on your part, and deep-rooted dislike, can account for your resting contented without possession of the Father's gift. What more will you venture to say the Father ought to have given? See what he has already given, and given without any claim on your part. If you are lost, your ruin will lie on yourself. Will ever your blasphemous lips dare to lay your damnation to the charge of such a God? Oh, fall in with his plan of grace! The plan that such a God proposes, must be one worthy of such a sinner's immediate acceptance. And immediate acceptance is the only manner in

which such a sinner can shew any due sense of the free grace of his God.

You who do already believe, be reminded that it is to the Father you owe all your peace, and joy, and blessed assurance of eternal life. You were once far off; and once you were only anxiously wishing to find his favour. But he showed your anxious souls his economy of grace - he brought you to drink of his living waters that are without price - he spread out the warrant before your eyes, and you were made to see that there was nothing left for you to complete. The Father's plan was so gracious, that, in seeing the Son, you saw a finished salvation. Oh, give glory evermore at once to 'Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb.'

IV. The amazing love of the Father appears in his revealing himself to us. - He does not act through an interpreter only, but he makes himself known. He gives us, as it were, the means of searching and trying his heart, that we may be quite sure of his whole mind towards us, and that his matchless character may draw our souls to himself.

He does this through the incarnation of Jesus. For we are told in our text, 'I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me,' - that is, not to exercise any separate will of mine as man, but as man to exhibit and to do the Father's will. All, therefore, that is in Christ, expresses the mind of his Father also. 'I am in the Father, and the Father in me ;' John 14:10. 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.' John 14:9.

O brethren, there is manifold love in his revelation to us of the Father. It is not only that our suspicious hearts would never have been quite at rest unless we had thus known the Father also; but it gives us a view of his willingness to condescend to us in any way that may more fully draw us, or be more likely to induce us to love 'the Lord our God with all our heart, and all our soul and all our mind, and all our strength.' He seems herein to come out of his 'light inaccessible,' that he may become known to his fallen creatures. This is like humiliation; it is the Father's condescension. If Solomon, in order to engage the confidence of some loathsome leper, had come forth in all his glory, in his royal apparel, and with his golden sceptre, then would all the land have rung with the story of his condescending kindness. And it is not less that our God has done. He has come forth that we might know him. He has put on the robe of humanity, wherein he could be best looked upon by our mortal eye, and he has shewn himself in all his grace and attractive love to a fallen world.

Herein is love! the Father will go to the utmost length in order to draw you back from the pit. Like the Grecian mother who, by her song, drew back her wilful child from the edge of the awful precipice, and brought it to her bosom secure; so the Lord, by the discovery of his infinitely glorious and gracious nature, would draw you from your sin. He would present to your idolatrous and adulterous eyes a sight more attractive than earth, in its softest forms, can furnish. He would keep you back from hell, O sinner, by manifesting himself to you as altogether lovely! O how deep is your corruption! How strong your enmity! How unconquerable your perversity! You hate God, after seeing him revealed in Jesus! Every exhibition of greatness, mingled with grace in Jesus, was the revelation of the Father also! Every discovery of patience, long-suffering, and grieved love - every time Jesus went apart to weep in secret places for the pride of men, it was the Father's feeling also. When Jesus beheld Jerusalem, and wept over it, O there was a tender pity there that just pictured forth the Father's yearning compassion - as if the Father himself had come forth from the 'light inaccessible,' and had spoken in the hearing and sight of men, 'How shall I give thee up,

Ephraim; how shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah, and set thee as Zeboim ?' Nor is it less the Father's mind, when Jesus cries in your ears, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out.' This is the Father's will who has sent him. As if he knew that you might say, on hearing that it is certain that all shall come who are given to Christ, 'Ah, then, perhaps though I were to come, I would not be welcomed,' the Saviour says, and the Father speaks by his lips, 'Him that cometh I will in nowise cast out.' You shall never be rejected, if you come - never on the ground that you were too great a sinner - never on the ground that, though you come, you were not given to Christ. 'You shall in nowise be cast out.' Any question regarding the Father's secret purposes, or the Father's accurate foreknowledge of who are his own - any question of this sort is quite out of your province. It is friends who get acquainted with the secrets of another's heart; it is not strangers. You are to come on the strength of the warrant alone; and so you will become a friend and a child of his family, and be no more cast out.

V. The Father's amazing love appears in appointing the eternal reward for redeemed sinners. - Our text says, 'I came down to do the will of him that sent me,' and 'this is the Father's will that hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day ;' John 6:39. Therefore, says Jesus, 'I will raise him up at the last day ;' John 6:40.

It is remarkable how the Father delights to honour the Son while wearing our nature. It is of him in our nature, nay, in the act of bearing away, like the scape-goat, our sins on his person, that it is written, 'Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, and take it up again.' John 10:17. It is in our nature that he is to judge, and to him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess when he appears, clothed in our nature, and wearing the many crowns of this earth's dominion. Now, love to him in our nature is love to us. O, then, brethren, read here the Father's delight in our race. He takes our nature, in the person of Jesus, to his nearest presence; he sheds round it, in the person of Jesus, his brightest beams; he places it on his right hand in majesty. But farther, it is written here, that the rising of the believers in the resurrection of the just is appointed of the Father - ' that he should raise it up again at the last day.' It is he who has purposed the glorious triumph over death, which believers gain in the resurrection morn. It is he who planned that they should live and reign with Christ, blessed and holy, children of the first resurrection, and never subject to the second death. It is he who blesses them; for the King shall say, 'Come ye blessed of my Father;' Matthew 25:34. It is he who bestows the kingdom upon them; 'I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed me ;' Luke 22:29. It is he who gives them power over the nations; for Christ in giving his power says, 'Even as I received of my Father;' Revelation 2:27. It is the Father who introduces them to the glory of Christ; John 17:24. It is in the Father's house they dwell - in his many mansions; John 14:2. And even as Jesus went to the Father so do they; for they are 'with him where he is,' in the immediate presence of the Father.

Thus, brethren, every token of love, in that blessed kingdom, bears the impress of the Father's grace. Every glory there sparkles with beams of the Father's love. O what a God of love is our God. And it is to his bosom the returning sinner comes. Sweet and blessed hope! to be near him, to try the depths of his heart - to have access through Jesus in our nature to his bosom - and so to be able to pour out our heart to him, and feel him pour out his to us. This is life eternal. A child of God once asked, in meditating on the words - 'Where thou causest thy flock to rest' - where this resting-place might be thought to be? One said, 'In Jesus.' But the other replied, 'It is even in the Father's bosom.' And truly this is a believer's deepest rest. 'By him we believe in God,' 1 Peter

1:21, that is, the Father; and 'we come unto God by him;' Hebrews 7:25. It is your place of rest, believer. It is the inner apartment of the pavilion - the secret of the tent. It is the farthest off spot from earth, it is out of sight of its pleasures, joys, gain, ambition. 'Love not the world, neither the things of the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;' 1 John 2:15. 'Little children, ye have known the Father;' 1 John 2:13.

O beloved, before I conclude, let me once more cast out the cords of love to draw the rebellious among you. This God is our God. This is he who assures you of his desire for your salvation, 'I have no pleasure at all in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord, but rather that he turn from his ways and live,' You are the worm that tried to crawl up to his throne, and to sit down as sovereign, and yet he has not crushed you! Your bosom is the seat of fearful sin, hatred of the holy one, dark suspicions of his sincerity, fond plans of self-exaltation, selfish schemes for present indulgence, ungodly fancies, sensual, earthly, devilish desires. Yet still our God, even the Father, laments over you. He takes no blame to himself for your wretched degradation; for, on the contrary, he has at every step cast hindrances in your way to hell. He laments over you, 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help found !' He loved Jesus all the more for dying and rising again (John 10:17), because it opened up the channel of love; it gave vent to his love to man. Only draw near and see this ocean. It is the same ocean of love which is seen when you look on a dying Saviour; but it is the same ocean seen from another point of view. And what can exceed the power of the appeal which God hereby makes to you, when he declares, 'That it is not the love of the Son alone, but the unbought, free, eternal love of Godhead !' It is the Father who lays down Jesus for a foundation stone, and cries to a careless world, 'Behold! I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone.' It is the Father who calls and invites, 'Behold! my servant whom I have chosen! mine elect in whom my soul delighteth !' It is the Father who points to the cross and cries to all the earth, 'I, even I am he who blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own name's sake, and will not remember thy sins.' This is the Father's will, and Christ himself is the herald that proclaims it to a lost world, 'This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life!'

Chapter 144

S. The Man who lent Christ the Upper Room

The Man who lent Christ the Upper Room.

Matthew 17:1-19 THE disciples did not go to look for a room till they had consulted with their Lord. Never do anything without asking counsel of your Master. But why did they need to do this? It was Christ's way to wait till He was asked, and you know it is His way still. 'I will for this be inquired of.' Do you not feel a sort of envy of those who were permitted to do anything for Christ? Do you not envy Peter who lent Christ his boat? And do you not envy this man who was able to lend Him his upper room? There are many things we can lend Christ now though He is not with us.

Here comes to light a secret friend, as if to counter balance the secret foe, Judas. This man loved Christ, for the name 'Master' ('didaskalos') works on him like a talisman. Notice■

I. This man's reverence for ordinances.■He had got ready a fine, large airy room to lend to worshippers who came up at this Feast. He had set couches ready for the guests■ 'furnished'■for they were not as those in old time coming out of bondage, staff in hand. They are sons in freedom. The Lord chose the room for its airiness and comfort, for He never wants us needlessly to do penance. It was large■for He knew what was to be transacted in that upper room another day.

II. This man's love for Christ.■There was no more needed than to say, 'The Master saith.' Scribes and Pharisees would not speak of Him thus, but friends did. A hint was enough■as when John whispered to Peter, 'It is the Lord.' You may say there is no express command for certain things. But do you need an express command? Is a hint not enough?

III. The honour put on the man.■Did not Peter get a reward in the draught of fishes for lending his boat? and the boy who lent his basket? This room is to be known for ever as a 'Peniel'■a 'Bethel' ■ 'Jehovah Shammah'■greater than the temple. If men proudly say, 'Queen Mary stayed here a night'■what would this man ever after say? 'Here He, the King of Glory, washed His disciples feet. Here He ate the Passover, and instituted the Supper. Here he said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." ' That upper room is fragrant with the myrrh and aloes and cassia of Christ's words of grace. But more; He came back to that upper room, and breathed the Holy Ghost on His disciples. This man was no doubt one of the hundred and twenty disciples who afterwards waited in that upper room in prayer. Are you like him? Will you say of your heart, 'Be lifted up and let the King of Glory come in' ? He will sit down there and make that heart of yours memorable. He will wash you in His blood from every stain. He will fill you with His own Spirit. He will discourse over again to you these words of His. He will keep the Supper with you!

S. The Mercy Seat

The Mercy Seat "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17:11).

"There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat" (Exodus 25:22).

READER! Have you ever felt your need of salvation! Have you ever sought it, as one who must obtain it■or perish? When a sinner is first brought to feel sin to be a burden■when he feels wrath abiding upon his soul, and that his whole past life has been a life without God■his question is, "What must I do to be saved?" "Is it possible that my sin can ever be forgiven by a God who is angry with the wicked every day?" The awakened publican■s cry is, "O God, be merciful to me!" And this cry finds God in the very attitude of grace, proclaiming his name. "The Lord, the Lord God merciful," and pointing to the Saviour on the throne of grace, where we may obtain mercy. In Old Testament times, the Lord set forth our condition on the one hand, and His respect toward us in the other, in one part of the furniture of the Tabernacle. He did this in the mercy-seat. This name is given to that part of the ark, in the holy of holies, whereon the blood used to be sprinkled on the day of atonement. The mercy-seat was the lid of the ark, as broad and long as the ark itself, and made of the same precious material; and the lid, or mercy-seat, being sprinkled with blood seven times, set forth to us the blood of Jesus Christ, which cleanseth from all sin.

Now, it is where the blood is, that mercy for sinners is to be found. For they deserve to die; and their deserved doom must be exhibited, and exacted at the hands of another, if they themselves are to escape. Therefore, the place where mercy can be found, is the place where the blood is. No other place, O sinner, in the wide world for you! But to that place you may come■nay, must come, if you would escape the wrath of God.

(1) You must come as a sinner. You must come with nothing but sin. On the day of atonement, the priest in Israel who came forward to the mercy-seat, laid down nothing but sin on that blood-sprinkled lid. He showed a sinner’s way of coming to the Lord; and yet he brought nothing what-ever but sin, to be laid down there. So the sinner, in coming to the mercy-seat, brings nothing but sin. He confesses the sin he was born with: "Behold! I was shapen in iniquity"; and lays it down on the sprinkled blood. He confesses his inheritance of corruption from Adam, and lays it down on that mercy-seat. He confesses his own personal sins, in their various forms, aspects, aggravations; the sins of his life and lips, as far as memory can remember, and lays them down upon the sprinkled blood. He calls to mind his sins as a member of society; sins in the relations of life■sins against the Church of God, sins as one of a guilty nation, sins as a man belonging to a world lying in wickedness. And as he feels and deplores all, he lays down his innumerable sins on the mercy-seat. He tries to look in, and bring out the sins of his heart■ sins of thought, feeling, affection, desire, hope. His hardness of heart, his blindness, above all, self, in its ten thousand times ten thousand forms, all are laid upon the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat. His unbelief■the grace of God, as well as His law, despised, slighted, undervalued, set aside, times without number■unbelief, even since he knew the Lord, caused by the deceitfulness of sin, by earthly

care, by passing pleasure, by Satan's wiles, by a too pliable or too fearful soul■this, too, is brought out, confessed, and laid upon the blood. Yet more: the sin of his holy things is laid there too; for the very act of confession has its sin, there is some blemish in the very act of faith; there is a film in the eye that looks to the atoning Saviour. Who can understand his errors? Oh, who can declare his own heart's utter sinfulness! At length it is done. But what does it discover? He has laid down his whole soul there■his very self; but in all this there has been nothing but sin for him to leave there! No holiness is laid down on that blood, for it is from all sin that the blood cleanses.

You come, therefore, wholly as a sinner. Nothing can be more deeply solemnising than this. To have such a burden to lay down there■to have nothing else than a burden of this kind, and to lay all this on the Lord Jesus Christ! How humbling, how fitted to lay the sinner in the dust, is the view this gives of his utter guilt and vileness! And yet nothing is more inviting, for it is with sin he comes, and as a sinner; and the Lord Jesus meets the sin and the sinner. Is there, then, any room for delay? any ground for excuse for hesitating to come at once?

Reader! Have you ever laid to heart that this is THE TRUTH, as to the state in which a sinner comes to the mercy-seat for pardon? Is it true that the greatness of your sins need be no hindrance to your acceptance, if only you are now willing, with all your heart, to turn from sin to God? Yes; it is true. It was for sinners, the mercy-seat was made. It was for sinners the blood was shed. "This is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick . . . I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matthew 9:12-13).

When, at any time, you have heard Christ in all His fulness pressed upon your acceptance■when you have been invited, without delay, to draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith■is it not true that secretly you may have been raising some such difficulty as this. "Oh, but I am such a sinner■I cannot expect to be received just as I am. I must wait till I have mended my life, and then I will come. I must wait till I have prayed longer, and then I will come. I must wait till I have had deeper convictions of sin, and then I may hope that the Lord will receive me if I come" Is this your view of the way of salvation? If it be, you are surely all in the wrong. Is it not just as if you were to say, "I cannot go to God just now, for I am a poor, vile, guilty sinner, with no good thing about me at all■a poor beggar, who has nothing to give for salvation. But I shall wait till I have something to recommend me, and then I shall go." Dear reader, would this be a free salvation? You want to pay for salvation; but God offers you salvation without money and without price. "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isaiah 55:1). "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

But, moreover, supposing it had been required that you should bring some good thing with you when you came to the mercy-seat, how vain would have been your hopes? He, who for a moment, cherishes such a thought has evidently never been brought to feel the total and utter depravity of his nature■that in him, that is, in his flesh, dwelleth no good thing (Romans 7:18). When a sinner is once truly awakened by the Spirit of God to see the awful ruin of his condition, he then feels that, so far from its being a comfort to him, the very thing that is the likeliest to drive him to despair would be to tell him that he must wait till he find some good thing in him to recommend him before he could hope for pardon from an angry God. The Lord shows us a more excellent way. Glorious

truth! spoken of Jesus by those who were stumbled by its very glory■ "This man receiveth sinners" (Luke 15:2). In the Gospel-call, so far as any ground of acceptance is concerned, the Lord has no respect to the sinner's state at all, as to whether it be better? or whether it be worse. The only question is, Art thou willing? The invitation is,"Whosoever will."

(2) The sinner who comes in faith to the mercy-seat is immediately received. The priest who thus confessed and spread out his sin, found God at that spot where the seven-times sprinkled blood lay, waiting to be gracious. There never was seen the flash of angry lightning over the mercy-seat. There never was heard one faint murmur of Sinai-thunder there. There was, on the contrary, the bright and glorious cloud that cast its mild rays, sweeter than ever did setting sun, over the sinner who had on that spot spoken out his soul's guilt, and left it on the blood.

God looked on the atoning blood, and pointing to it, seemed to say, "I am well pleased therein; and therefore, spare this sinner." He saw His justice satisfied, because fully met by that setting forth of death for the guilty. Bending over it, it was as if He bent over His beloved Son, in whom He is ever well pleased. The sinner, too, fixed his eye on the same atonement that lay on that mercy-seat; and after having so confessed his sinfulness, stood gazing on the blood, as if to say, "Lord, there is my death for each sin; there is my satisfaction; there is my propitiation; there is Thy law■s demand; I do not seek aught inconsistent with Thy perfect righteousness!" And this is the position of a believing soul. His eye is on Jesus. His ear hears the testimony, that because of the blood, God has given us eternal life (1 John 5:11). His soul says, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to me." He is told, "Him hath God set forth to be a propitiation" (Romans 3:25), and he believes it, and holds it up to God. God owns it as enough, and is at peace with him.

Reader! have you ever laid to heart that this is THE TRUTH concerning the blood of Christ■that there is immediate pardon for every sinner believing in it, and resting upon it? The broken law proclaims that the wages of sin is death. The sinner's hope is not a hope procured upon any other terms. If it were so, where. or when for a moment, would the sinner be safe? It would be but a saying, "Peace, peace," while the law said there was no peace. No. Salvation is not an unrighteous compromise between the law and the Gospel. The law's terms to the sinner are, "The wages of sin is death." And the law's terms to the sinner's Surety are, "The wages of sin is death." God does not take the believer's five talents for the hundred which he owed, and call them a hundred, in order that his saving love might reach him. But for the hundred talents which he owed, Christ has paid a hundred■paid the uttermost farthing. The law required perfect obedience, and blood. Christ, as the sinner's Surety, has rendered perfect obedience, and blood.

"Do we, then, make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Romans 3:31). There is nothing in all the universe which so proclaims God's holy wrath against sin, as that blood of Christ, which is the only meeting-place between an unholy sinner and a holy God. The law proclaims that the wages of sin is death; the Gospel proclaims, through that blood not only that wages of sin is, but has been, death. That blood tells every one that believeth, not only that the wages of his sin is death, but that the wages has been paid, and that now the bitterness of that death is past. Reader! see in that blood that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so now grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 5:21).

Here is peace for the guilty, rest for the weary. Behold this blood! Behold, in what it has done in all generations, the power of that blood to bring far off sinners nigh! Behold that mercy-seat, where

the precious atonement-blood is sprinkled? There God is waiting to be gracious■waiting to meet you! There, and there only, the Holy One can meet with the guilty, and be reconciled. There is salvation to the uttermost, to all who will draw near. That blood offers immediate forgiveness. It is the plea which God Himself, with whom we have to do, has furnished to the perishing sinner. Will He not accept His own plea ?■"the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by Him who do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead and gave Him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God" (1 Peter 1:21). Will He not recognise the preciousness and power of the blood of His beloved Son, when it is held up in faith by the believing soul? (Read 1 John 1:7; Colossians 1:12-15; Ephesians 2:12-15; Hebrews 12:24).

(3) Is a sinner's appeal to the blood of Jesus his only ground of acceptance? Yes, the one and only ground. The great thing that has created a difference between the soul now believing, and other souls still in sin, is that the eye of the believing one has been fixed upon the atonement. Others see not the power of the blood, and so have no plea with God.

There is nothing else on which the Holy Ghost fixes a sinner's eye, when it is He who is guiding us to God. The world sends us to qualities in ourselves, and to efforts of our own; and Satan approves of the world■s way, as being a part of the way of death. But the Holy Ghost, who testifies of Christ, guides none to peace and salvation, but by fixing their eye on the blood alone. He never turns a sinner's eye in on himself as a means of confidence, He never bids a sinner see his own character, and so draw encouragement. No! the Lord■s way ever has been to "glorify Christ," in order to give confidence to a sinner. The seven-times sprinkled blood on the mercy-seat is enough to give us boldness to draw near■enough to give us full assurance. Believer! why do you live with anything less than full assurance of your acceptance? Why cast suspicion on the fulness of Christ? Why raise doubts concerning the truth of God■ s testimony? Why act as if you feared that Christ's death and resurrection were not the sinner's all-sufficient warrant? Why tremble, as if the Rock of Ages were giving way? And yet, how many, even among the people of God, live as if they believed that a sinner might find hope in resting his soul upon the blood of Christ, but that assurance of salvation were not to be looked for till after many days. Does it not seem as if it were not till something they fancy they can do, or be, or suffer, or attain to, is reached, that they think they can presume to look for a joyful assurance of salvation? Are not souls often met with, inquiring the way of salvation, and perhaps, evidencing their sincerity with many tears, who say that as yet they have no comfort, but that they are trying all they can, and they hope soon to attain to it. May there not in all this be a looking, perhaps an unconscious looking, towards something else, for present acceptance and a present joyful assurance of salvation, besides the finished work of Christ? Is it not to be feared that a dimness of perception, in this respect, is the cause of much of the darkness and bondage in which many, even of the true children of God, are held so long? Is there not in this a practical denial that Christ's work finished for sinners, and that finished work alone, is ground sufficient to warrant a believing sinner's present hope and full assurance of salvation? Is there not in this a confounding of the Spirit's work in the sinner with Christ's work for the sinner, as the ground of his acceptance with God? Does it not tend toward the Popish delusion, that it is for our work accepted for Christ's sake, and not for Christ's sake alone, that we are accepted? Is it not just a going about, in a more subtle form, to establish a righteousness of our own, and a refusing to submit ourselves to the righteousness of God? Is it not

just the voice of the same deceiver who said of the terms of the old covenant, "Ye shall not surely die!" now saying of the terms of the new, "Ye shall not surely live?"

Dear reader, we affectionately urge this matter upon you; for we believe it nearly concerns your own salvation—your own peace and holiness. If my warrant to be assured of salvation depended upon the measure of my attainments, how could I ever be assured of salvation? How could I ever be assured that I had attained such a measure as would secure my acceptance, and my deliverance from the hand of my enemies, that I might serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of my life? How could the jailer have been safe in rejoicing in Christ, the same hour of the night? How could the eunuch have been warranted in going on his way rejoicing?

But, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord." Blessed be God, it is not a peradventure, left in uncertainty until after death or judgment, on which I am pleaded with to rest my eternal all. It is a work devised for sinners, undertaken for sinners, wrought out for sinners, finished for sinners, and accepted by God for sinners, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead. And we have not to go to the uttermost parts of the earth to seek it. O reader! that finished work, that immediate acceptance and salvation, is nigh thee—in thy hand—in thy mouth—in thy heart! "Hearken unto Me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteous-ness; behold! I bring near My righteousness!" (Isaiah 46:12-13). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). But is there, then, no hope that we are in Christ unless we possess this full assurance? We do not say so, though we believe that this question has often been used as a refuge from the guilt of not resting with full confidence on the blood of Christ. By reason of the weakness of their faith, and the strength of corruption within, the holiest of men are often found walking in darkness; but what we plead for is this, that if a child of God be not kept in peace as regards his acceptance, it is not for the want of something in Christ, but because of his own want of faith, to take freely what has been so freely given; and that all such doubts and fears regarding the fulness of Christ—whatever be the humbled and exercised look they may assume—while they are the believer’s misery, are no less truly the believer’s sin. And this is the true way of holiness. The same apostle who proclaims salvation "to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly," beseeches us, by those very mercies of God, to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. The same sprinkled blood which speaks peace to the sinner, proclaims to that sinner continually, "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s" (1 Corinthians 6:20).

How precious, then, this way of acceptance! We need no more than this, for immediate and present pardon. The crucified and risen Jesus, and nothing else, brings us nigh to God. The crucified and risen Jesus, apart from all besides, reconciles us to God. The crucified and risen Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. He has borne an awful testimony that the wages of sin is death, and has thus opened the way of salvation for the very chief of sinners, the very basest and vilest of men.

Reader! have you ever felt this blood of Christ to be precious blood? Have you been convinced of sin, and convinced of righteousness? Have you ever felt God’s holy justice in requiring such a sacrifice, and His holy love in providing it, not sparing His only begotten Son? Have you ever felt

the necessity for that blood being shed, and sprinkled upon your soul before you could be pardoned? It is the blood, and the blood alone, which maketh atonement for the soul. It was to this blood of Christ, seen by faith through the types of the ceremonial law, that David was looking in the Fifty-first Psalm, when, in bitterness for his guilt, he cried, Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psalms 51:7). Has the insupportable burden of sin ever thus fixed your eye upon that blood whence alone pardon and relief can come? Or are you yet easy-minded about the state of your soul? Does your conscience tell you that it would make no material difference to you, if you were to be told that now there was to be no longer any access to the mercy-seat for you? Dear reader, think what you are doing. Is sin a fancy? Is the wrath of God a vain imagination? If these were matters of little consequence, if they were as small matters as you now think them, would God have given His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life?

You do not deny that you are a sinner■ by nature "dead in trespasses and sins," a child of wrath, even as others (Ephesians 2:1, Ephesians 2:3). How, then, do you expect to be saved? Are you not neglecting the great and the only salvation? How shall you escape? (Hebrews 2:3). He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace" (Hebrews 10:28-29)? The blood was always upon the mercy-seat. It was there, night and day, summer and winter, year after year. So Jesus is. He is never unable or unwilling to receive one coming sinner. Do you ask, Who are they who would be welcome? He answers, "Him that cometh" (John 6:37). Every sinner, of every kind and character. Great and small, young and old, are welcome. Nicodemus came to Jesus by night■and he was welcome. The woman that feared to be seen touched Him■and was cured. All the publicans and sinners drew near to Him■and He stood in the midst. "Him that cometh," said He, "I will in no wise cast out." And who must come? All that would not perish for ever. For, "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). No other mercy-seat, no other throne of grace, no other key to open the door, no other way into the Holiest, no other plea that the Advocate will use at the great assize, no other advocate, no other propitiation held forth by God, no other cord of mercy flung out, in view of that wide, endless eternity.

"Having, therefore, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:19-22). Seek ye the Lord, while He may be found. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

And, O reader, there is no other time but "Now."

S. The Pins of the Tabernacle

The Pins of the Tabernacle.

Exodus 27:19; Exodus 38:31; Exodus 39:40.

These verses teach us a great deal.

I. God's notice of little things.■He takes time to speak about them, and bids Moses write about them. He says as much about the 'pins' in these passages as He does about the work of creation.

II. God's notice of those who carried the pins (Numbers 3:36-37).■The pins and the cords were under the charge of the sons of Merari, and God looked on those who carried the pins■the very smallest things connected with His work. They marched through the desert■they got the same gleams from the Pillar-Cloud as those who carried the Ark or the Candlestick. It is just like our God to attend to the small things very carefully: the wing of a fly, a blade of grass. It is characteristic of His greatness that He can attend to the small things as well as to the great■while He is listening to the praises of eternity He can be thinking on those who are carrying the pins of the tabernacle. Does not this appear in what Christ says, 'Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father'? 'The very hairs of your head are all numbered.' What comfort there is in this! Are you ever afraid to tell God your small things, as if they were not worth while His attending to? But your great things are not any more worth attending to. This should lead us to lay our care upon Him, to trust Him better.

III. This teaches us to be contented with out lot.■The sons of Merari might say, 'Why do our brethren the Kohathites carry the Ark?' Because God said it; that is all. He that serves most is the greatest in the kingdom. He who carries the pins may get the greatest reward. You may think you are in a very small sphere. God says, 'Here is your sphere, here stand.' The poorest Israelite, serving God in his dwelling, might get as much of the divine favour as did Daniel, who was governor over a hundred and twenty-seven provinces. Do not say, 'I want to get out of the rut into another place.' If you get out of the rut of carrying pins when God put you there, you will not be blessed. Are we in the camp with God? That is the great thing. Come to the altar and lay your hand on the sacrifice, and thus claim a sinner's access to a holy God. Then God will give you your place, and, whether it be large or small, He will shine on you with the brightness of His face for ever and ever!

S. The Scapegoat

The Scapegoat.

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" And Aaron shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scape-goat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, and offer him for a sin-offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scape-goat, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scape-goat into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited. " Leviticus 26:7-10, Leviticus 26:22.

One of the most arresting and instructive ceremonies of the day of atonement was the presenting of the double sin-offering. This sin-offering (unlike any other, and resembling only the two birds in the leper's cleansing) consisted of the sacrifice of one goat and the sending away of the other out of sight for ever. It was a sin-offering, which purposely presented two sides or aspects of the truth, namely, how God can be satisfied in the case of a sinner, and next, how the sinner's guilty conscience is to be satisfied.

I. The first goat taught how God can be satisfied in the case of a sinner. Aaron laid his hand on the head of this atoning offering, to show thereby the laying on it the sin of those for whom he acted, and then slew the goat. This done, he carried its blood in a bowl into the most holy place, where, standing right in front of the mercy-seat, he sprinkled it again and again, until seven times. He then repeated his sprinkling upon the mercy-seat itself again and again, until seven times. And there the shed blood, the outpoured life of this victim, substituted in the room of Israel, was laid down before Jehovah in the most solemn manner, and was left there on the very mercy-seat, as well as in front of it, under the bright cloud of glory. Thus it was presented to the Lord, and lay all the year round under his eye, the glory resting over it, or, in other words, the God of glory accepting it, and saying, by that cloud resting over it, " I am satisfied; I am well pleased to take the substitute's death in room of the sinner, on whom lies the sentence, Thou shalt die." By this type the sinner is taught that God accepts a substitute. Especially, it shows us how God, in all his truth, and holiness, and righteousness, is able to save a guilty soul to the uttermost, by taking a victim in his stead. The type thus proclaims God satisfied in the death of his beloved Son, whose blood it was that fulfilled all types. And so we have here an aspect of the truth, viz., the certainty that God is well pleased with Christ's being "made sin for us," in order that we might be made "the righteousness of God in him." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

II. The second goat (which we usually call the scape-goat, as in Leviticus 26:8-10, etc.) was intended to teach how the guilty conscience of a sinner may be satisfied. If a holy and just God sees enough in the beloved Son, "made sin for us," to give him entire satisfaction, it is plain that a

sinner’s conscience, however deeply awakened, however sensitive and tender, may be satisfied on the same grounds. If only the sinner see in that sin-offering what God sees in it, the sinner could not help being satisfied, being persuaded that God had found all that vindicated his character, and showed him to be just, while justifying the ungodly who made his offering his plea. The object of the scape-goat, therefore, was to make known to Israel the fact that God was thus satisfied. Everything connected with the scape-goat bore upon this aspect of the truth. It was (so to speak) a re-enacting before all the people of what had been enacted before Jehovah in the case of the first goat. Accordingly, while some of the blood of that first goat was to be "put upon the horns of the altar" (Leviticus 26:18), that all men might see it as they stood in the courts, Aaron was directed to take the second goat and deal peculiarly with it. And thus it was: Aaron laid both his hands upon its head, confessing over it all the iniquities and all the transgressions of the children of Israel, in all their sins (Leviticus 26:21). The sins that have already been atoned for by the blood of the first goat are anew brought out to view, and all Israel hears what it was that Aaron atoned for, and what it was that the Lord accepted an atonement for, in the most holy place. It was, O Israel, every sin of thine, and every form of sin, - sin in all its aggravations, sin of crimson and and scarlet dye. Yes, listen, and you will hear that it was not thy merit or worth that Aaron carried in, but thy guilt and wickedness, thy sin, thy transgressions, thine iniquities, "which offend infinite majesty, despise infinite authority, affront infinite sovereignty, abuse infinite mercy, provoke infinite justice, oppose infinite holiness, hate infinite love." Aaron stands before all the people, both his hands resting on the head of the goat, to express the thorough and undoubted transference of guilt. This done, the goat, with its load of imputed guilt, is led away in sight of all the people, - led out of the camp, away to the wilderness. "A fit man," a qualified person, chosen for the express purpose, leads it away, and as it passes along every eye rests on it with solemn interest. They watch his progress after he leaves the farthest circle of tents, - they continue to follow him till he and the scape-goat are mere specks on the distant horizon, or are hid altogether by some intervening knoll. Did not that scape-goat (that is, "goat of departing," " goat that has gone away") tell what has been done with Israel’s sins? Did it not say that sin has been put all out of sight, never to be seen again? The scape-goat, with its awful load of sin confessed over it, is the substitute for Israel. The lightning of wrath must slope toward its guilty head, leaving Israel untouched. Let us follow it into its rugged, uninhabited land. It is now left alone. Its solitary cry is re-echoed by wild rocks; the howling of beasts of prey terrifies it; the gloom of night settles down upon it, and leaves it shivering with strange fear. Perhaps it is toward the Dead Sea that it directs its steps; but everywhere is barrenness and melancholy desolation. And then the storm lowers, the thunder roars, and the lightning from the dark cloud may perhaps stretch it lifeless on the ground. At all events, the scape-goat was never more to return; the sin-laden victim was never to reappear; for Israel must know that their sin is put away out of sight for ever. And in proportion as man dwelt upon this fact, his conscience would cease to tremble. If he saw herein God so satisfied that he had removed our iniquity from us "as far as the east is from the west," then would his peace be complete. And may we not say there is still another view of Christ here? There is in that melancholy scape-goat, led away to its dreary solitude, something represented concerning him who was a Man of Sorrows. There is something here about him who, "made a curse for us," was led away to unknown woes, left to suffer alone, abandoned by all, receiving no sympathy from earth or heaven. "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness," is his cry. He looks on his right, and there is none; refuge fails him: no man cares for his

soul. And thus it was he plunged into that mysterious darkness of wrath, bearing with him all the sins of all his Israel.

"That scape-goat’s disappearance is the disappearance of all my sins!" may be the joyful exclamation of the soul whom the Spirit has enabled to accept the Substitute. God is satisfied in him, and thus my soul is at rest. Jesus shows to the Father nothing but his own blood (never anything whatsoever of worth in the sinner) in pleading for souls; and his Holy Spirit nothing else to a guilty conscience, in order to bring it to perfect peace.

(With grateful thanks to Andrew Oliver for finding and typing this article)

It is interesting to read an entry in the diary at the end of January 1866, around the time he probably wrote the article:

"Our Communion. I felt myself as a minister not for a moment worthy to carry the message, nor at all able to declare the love of Him who died; but I know that the Lord can use me as the man who led away the scapegoat into the wilderness in sight of all the people. He can make me ’a fit man’ to do that service if He chooses."

Chapter 148

S. The Three Ananiases

The Three Ananiases.

Acts 23:5; Acts 23:9.

It is sometimes useful to put in juxtaposition separate facts and characters. The three Crosses■how instructive! the three Marys, the three Centurions. Here we have the three Ananiases. Their name means 'Jehovah is gracious.' Their parents thought it a lucky name, and all professed to rejoice in what it expresses. Many make this a pillow. Let us not be deceived by names or profession, for even devoutness is not faith, and profession is not principle.

I. Ananias, the enemy of the Cross.■He was the son of Nebadaeas and succeeded Joseph, who succeeded Annas and Caiaphas. You find him with the Bible in his hands from his birth, as a Levite and a priest. He had to do with the highest forms of religion, with its rites day by day at the altar. Once a year he would be in the Holy of Holies, and see the mercy-seat, and gaze on the blood,■yea, sprinkle it. Every holy thing in word and ordinance was familiar to him. And yet he was a 'whited wall,' ■only externally comely, all formalism and externalism. He hated vital religion and grew wroth at every manifestation of it. His bosom friends were Roman governors and such as Tertullus (Acts 24:1). The world, even the same pleasures that heathenism relished, was still in his heart. Josephus tells that before the last siege of the city, he hid in an aqueduct and was dragged out to die. Even so shall he try to hide under the rocks or cry, 'Mercy, O Lord!' according to his name, but shall not find it. In our community there are many such as Ananias, persons brought up with the Bible in their hand, familiar with ordinances, with the routine of the prayer-book, or family worship, or worship in church. Nay, they go to the Lord's Table, lifting up solemn hands, gazing on the blood on the mercy-seat, and saying 'We take it.' Yet their bosom friends are men like Felix or Tertullus, they are at home with them in pleasure and trifling gaieties. They instinctively shrink from true vital godliness and the men who have it, bid them 'hold their peace'■smite them on the mouth. They never knew the new birth. Union to Christ is to them cant or nonsense. And so they die! But on the day of Christ, lo! they are dragged from the covert of the rocks and hills.

II. Ananias the apparent believer.■He was a hollow-hearted man, yet he seemed sound. It was a revival time when the tide was high. He joined the true believers at a time when faith was strong in them, when they were accustomed to live each day looking into glory and were on the wing above earth. Feeling a secret conviction that they were right, he threw in his lot with them, separated himself from former friends, took the godly as his companions, praised and admired the Apostle, and became quite zealous. But he was not really born again, the Spirit was not in him, as soon appeared. For either from a wish to be less obscure, or from partial conviction that self-denial was right, he sold part and pretended to give all. And so we see he had never quietly rested on Christ and been content with His Nazareth obscurity of obedience. He died an awful death. His name availed not, there was no 'grace' for him. He sank down■what an awful surprise !■from the very midst of the believers.

There are some such among us still. They have a secret conviction that it is safe and right to be believers, so they imitate others, attend meetings, separate themselves from the world. You may detect in yourselves a likeness to Ananias. Perhaps, when you find yourself overlooked you wish to be known or else to go back. Or when a missionary cause is pleaded you give a little, and say to conscience, 'It is all I can afford.' Perhaps you are half■conscious that it is the example of others that carries you along. Are you willing to detect yourself? Ask yourself, 'Why am I not willing to do as Jesus did at Nazareth, though unnoticed? Why am I complacent at any good thing I say or do? Are not these to a real saint as natural as streams to a spring? Am I independent of money and comforts, of name and praise for my heaven, finding it in Jesus?' The Spirit has found you out, for He never knew a time when He opened the door of your heart. Your conscience may be quiet by your profession. O look on sin as you see it in the Law and in the Cross, not as you feel it. You cannot lie to the Holy Ghost in vain!

III. Ananias, the true disciple.■One of God's happy servants. You see his life in Acts 22:12, 'of good report;' he 'observed the law;' he was ready to obey (Acts 9:10-17). He learned to be a disciple first at the Cross when the voice said 'Ananias, come to Me,' and ever since he has obeyed it. Hear Christ speaking to His sheep by name 'Ananias!' and notice his brotherly love■ 'Brother Saul'. Have you private intercourse with Christ, and are you sent on His errands? Happy Ananias! He carried rest to Paul, who thereafter carried Christ to to many thousands; and whether, as tradition says, he died a martyr at Damascus, or on his bed, his end was peace. He answered to his name. He knew God was 'gracious.' At the Great Day yonder is Ananias in his robes of Priesthood, with the breastplate on which are the names of every tribe, but no room for the name of Jesus! Nay, his robes kept off the blood of Jesus. Then, there is the other Ananias. He saw that High Priest's heart was empty, but he himself never found what filled his whole soul. He fled from Sodom only to be a Lot's wife! But you, O holy Ananias, come! Paul is getting his crown, 'but not to me only'■to him who bade the scales fall from his eyes. Yes, says Jesus, to that quiet saint with whom I spoke, and who spoke with me■to Paul with his ten talents, to you with your five. 'Enter into the joy of thy Lord.' The first Ananias looked neither into himself to see the hell there, nor on Jesus, to see the door of heaven, or heaven itself, there. The second gave only a glance at both, and saw neither fully. But the third looked till he saw himself lost, and wrath his portion; and then upward, till he read, 'I have found a ransom' in the hand of the Father who pointed him to Jesus!

S. The Trial of Faith

The Trial of Faith.

Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

1 Peter 1:6-7 The prevailing state of our mind should be great joy - 'Wherein ye greatly rejoice.' Have you got at the Gospel at all if you have not great joy, if it does not every day make you glad? Our joy comes from a great Fountain - Christ Himself. Are you a disciple? Then can you bear to live below this standard? In spite of this joy you may be 'in heaviness through manifold trials.' Indeed, it is your great joy that enables you to bear them. What is the trial of faith? It is the outward pressure of circumstances, the waves dashing upon you as you stand on the Rock of Ages. Christ was tried. He was the crystal vessel, full of the purest water, and Satan was allowed to shake it to see if there was any mud in it, and there was not. The trial of faith came to Abraham in a strange way, threatening to bereave him of his beloved son. Abraham stood the test, and went on step by step till God said, 'Now I know that thou fearest Me,' etc., and the trial ended in 'praise, and honour, and glory.' The 'trial of faith' may come in disappointment in those we trusted in; it may come directly from the devil it may come from the state of the church; it may come from persecutions, bonds, imprisonments. It is quite natural to feel these trials. Down in the trough of the wave, then up again on the crest; that was Paul's experience. Then it is only 'for a season.'

I. God's deep interest in the trial of faith. - He says it is much more important than the goldsmith's trial of his gold. It is said that the goldsmith waits till he sees his face reflected in the gold, then he knows it is ready to be taken out. If we had seen with what intense interest the Father watched His beloved Son when He was 'tried' on the mount of temptation and on Mount Calvary! So with the members of His body. It is said, 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints,' and the word is literally 'deathpangs' - what they may be suffering at the time of their death. The Lord watches them with intense interest. You have multiplied trials; are you murmuring? Do you say 'It is very hard'? Would you say that to God? He is standing by and saying, 'See how faith sustains this disciple of mine!' Catch His eye, and you will be able to bear the 'trial.'

II. The result of this process. - 'Unto praise and honour and glory,' etc. This means to our praise, to our honour, to our glory. It will be to God's praise and honour and glory, for we will see that all His ways are excellent. An old Puritan says, 'A stick in the water looks crooked. Take it out, and it is quite straight.' So it will be when we look at God's dealings with us. When we see all, we will say of our bitterest sorrows that it would have been unkind in God not to have sent them. But it will be to our praise and honour and glory too. Angels will serve us all the more willingly because we never permitted a doubt or surmise of God's love to enter our mind. We shall have the greater glory, the more we have borne the trial of our faith. We are to be rewarded, not only for work done, but for burdens borne, and I am not sure but that the brightest rewards will be for those who have borne

burdens without murmuring. Are you not often saying, 'Oh, that that day would arrive, when God will reveal His Son Jesus Christ!' On that day He will take the lily that has been growing so long among thorns and lift it up to the glory and wonder of all the universe, and the fragrance of that lily will draw forth ineffable praises from all the hosts of heaven. Is it not worth while being 'tested' for a season ?

Chapter 150

S. The Value of a Thought

'The Value of a Thought'

[The notes which form this chapter are taken, with additions and explanations, from a little book in which Dr. Bonar had jotted down a brief account of the origin of his model of the Tabernacle. It was one of the methods of preaching the Gospel which he made use of during the course of his ministry - a method which he loved, and which, as these notes tell, was greatly blessed in many places throughout Scotland.] The value of a 'thought' may be very great. Everybody knows this. It may be the seed of a great harvest. But it is not the thought merely in itself, but the thought carried out and used.

It is like what in the mechanical department has been found to be the value of a small piece of metal, if turned to use by a little skill and application. A late writer shows that 'a farthing's worth of iron may be converted into an ounce of steel, by labour worth 4,5d. That, again, might be converted by labour into 2250 yards of spring wire, worth ■13,4s.od. By putting it through yet another process, that wire might be made into 7650 spring balances, worth 2/6d each, which, in the aggregate, could give ■960 odds.'

Starting with this illustration from mechanics, let me now show how in practical spiritual work a simple thought became the means of a great amount of blessing to souls. It is now thirty-three years at least since I first used this model.

About the year 1845, while in Collace, having read all I could find on the Tabernacle, and examined all the pictures and drawings that generally illustrate such books, I went one day to the workshop of a plain good man (an Old Light elder in the village of Sachar) and told him my idea of the possibility of making out of common wood a model of the Tabernacle. He was a turner and joiner. The good man was interested, and, at my suggestion, a board about 3 feet long and 1,5 broad was got ready - the oblong shape of the Tabernacle. Then he prepared sixty wooden pillars, and set them in their place to form the enclosure. Next, boring the pillars at the top, a cord was drawn through, and a rude contrivance was thus formed for suspending linen curtains. The first altar was boards of wood shaped into a square, and the boards covered with brass-filings. So also the laver. And then the forty boards of the Holy and Most Holy Place were got ready and covered with gold-leaf. At this juncture, a kind friend in Perth, hearing of my attempt, sent me a large ram's skin dyed red, to form one of the four coverings. Next, a 'wise-hearted' lady gave me a shawl of the Angola goat's hair to form the goat's-hair covering. The other two I supplied after a time with linen, on which were stripes of purple, blue, and scarlet, and a piece of badger-skin formed the outer covering.

It was not, however, till I had been in London, and had there seen a much more substantial model, that I found means of providing the furniture of the Sanctuary : Candlestick, Shew-bread, Incense-altar, and the Ark of the Covenant. In about a year thereafter my wooden pillars were exchanged for metal, etc. In short, I got in London a model so far ready-made, but I was led to

alter some of the articles. That model cost above ■3, nothing very attractive or beautiful in the appearance.

I remember the first evening when I exhibited the model in our church in Kinrossie to about one hundred people. The sun was near his setting, and his light was pouring in at one window. I lifted up the red ram's-skin covering, and asked, 'What does this remind you of?' A solemn silence first, and then a whisper : 'Blood, blood !'

Gradually, I got familiar with the whole subject, and in my own mind had special doctrines connected with all the different parts, e.g. the Door, with its royal colours, blue, purple, scarlet, was the Gospel call by divine authority (our God and King), 'Come freely' - no bar, no bolt. The Altar, justification ; the Laver, sanctification ; the Fine Linen, righteousness.

I soon discovered that I could vary the lecture, and sometimes abridge - sometimes enlarge - according to the audience. Young and old alike, I discovered, were drawn by it. On bidding a young person tell her mother to come, the little girl replied, 'May I come myself?' 'How often have you seen it already?' 'Only five times!'

I discovered that I myself never felt it stale. There was endless variety in that setting forth of Salvation, alike, too, in occasional drawing-room gatherings or in cottages. When I came to Glasgow I got the case made for carrying the Courts, and the box for the Holy and Most Holy Places.

I had visits from some well-known people who wanted to see the model, among others, Mr. Soltau, who wrote a book on the Tabernacle. Canon Savage came on purpose to spend an hour going over the model.

It has been shown in about one hundred places, and about two hundred times. My cousin, an Irvingite, insisted that silver was the type of love. 'How do you find that?' 'It was so common in Solomon's days, nothing accounted of!'

Many confused Solomon's Temple with the Tabernacle. They are quite distinct. The Tabernacle showed God's way of grace ; the Temple showed the kingdom of glory.

Many good hints I have got from others. J.M. said about brass : 'Brass will crack and not stand great heat.' 'But the Hebrew is properly copper.' 'Ah, that will do ; that stands any heat.' Another said : 'Copper, not brass, is the right word for the material for the altar.' 'Why?' 'Brass is a mixed metal, and there was to be no mixture in the things of God ; no linen and woollen.' A minister of the Free Church, now gone, was first awakened to interest in spiritual things by seeing the model exhibited in Cathcart Free Church.

About the year 1862 I had shown the model in the hall of Free St.Enoch's. At the close, Mr. Nichol, colleague to Dr. Henderson, rose and said he would like to tell a story connected with the model. When he was a student at home in Dundee, he heard I was to show it one day (a holiday of some kind) in the schoolhouse of Tealing, where Mr. Mellis was minister. Among those who flocked in was a boy - a schoolboy. he had recently played the truant for a week. He had got a shilling from his father to buy a new book, had spent it, and kept away from school, but came home every day at the regular time, pretending all was right. He was miserable under this system of deceit. In this state he came into the schoolroom, and when hearing of the Altar and its blood, and the Laver

purifying, saw how he could be forgiven, found rest, went home, and confessed all. At Bishopbriggs an elder said, 'It was the Blood that was the best of it.' A little girl, telling all about the model, dwelt on the Blood, - 'And the Blood was shown every day, every day !' In Moray Free Church, Edinburgh, a young man reminded me that I had shown the model in a meeting in Carrick Street, and said, 'That was the night J.F. was brought in.'

Dr. Robert Burns of Toronto saw it in 1850, and said at the close, 'It is true, "faith cometh by hearing," but, friends, may we not say also to-night, faith cometh by seeing, for we have seen the Gospel ?'

Dr. Bannerman remarked, 'I noticed you sometimes said, "This suggests such a truth." That's the right way to put it, for, while we have authority for some things as meant to be types, there are others we cannot say more than that "they suggest this."'

Mr. Pinkerton of Kilwinning remarked, after seeing the model, 'I never heard a better sermon.' A lady met me, and said, 'Thanks for the sermon last Tuesday, the sermon you did not preach.' 'What was it?' 'I came into the church, and the sight of the furniture of the Tabernacle was a great sermon to me - the best sermon I ever heard - a flood of light.'

Mr. John Smith, our missionary, was conscious to himself of a new hold of truth from the day he saw the model, and always took delight afterwards in seeing it again and again.

M. W. got more sure rest to his soul the night he first saw the Tabernacle. The wife of a minister in the country, and her niece, had been awakened, and came to call. She sat for an hour asking questions about the truth suggested by the model which providentially was on my study-table. I had been showing it to a student. The account of the High Priest's dress on the Day of Atonement, - all white linen, - while he carried in the charger of blood, was blessed to a young woman, who never till then entertained the thought of every day looking at the blood again, and going to God.

Mr. L., at Alloa, asked me what I thought about this : 'If the Most Holy Place was shut all the year till the Day of Atonement, the dust would be thick, and the air anything but fresh. Would the Glory hinder the dust falling? and would it not give a constant freshness to the room?' A minister's wife said it was on occasion of a lecture at Dundee on the Tabernacle, that she first felt the holiness of God, and a strong wish to speak to some one about her soul.

Mrs. S. (Balbeggie, near Collace) never so felt the holiness of God's presence as in looking in when the light was put into the Holy of Holies, and we were asked to think of going alone into God's presence there. The Gate - no bar, and so easily opened. Many spoke of that. Young people saw at once how young Samuel could 'open the gate of the house of the Lord.' In the Court the pillars had a 'fillet' each, as well as a 'hook', made of Ransom-money. Dr. Lorimer stopped me when showing it at the Shelter in Glasgow, and asked the girls to notice, 'Even the ornaments of God's people must be in connection with ransom,' - not to please ourselves. The Altar with its daily lamb. One came to me and said, 'I've been thinking if it took fifteen hundred years to set out a picture of the Lamb of God, O what is He Himself !' The Altar was carried by the staves. God taught the priests to be very reverent. The four horns are the emblem of power. The blood on the horns was to show the power there was in the blood. A worthy elder in Perth used to speak of his conversion as 'the day when I first knew the power of the blood.' The Laver, filled with pure water to the brim. Water represents the Spirit. The Spirit will stay wherever the blood is. First the Altar,

then the Laver. The Altar says, 'the blood of Jesus delivers from the guilt of sin.' The Laver says, 'the Spirit of Jesus delivers from the power of sin.' A friend asked, 'Where did they get the water for the Laver the first time? From the stream that flowed from the Smitten Rock !' The Holy spirit from a Smitten Christ ! The Badger-skin and the Goat-hair coverings. In the R.V. 'badger-skin' is 'seal-skin,' and in the margin, 'porpoise-skin.' One said about these, 'I used to be content with the Badger-skin (mere shelter), but now I'm under the Goat's-hair - delighting in the beauty put upon the justified by the righteousness of Christ imputed.' Mr. T.B., from Holland, was particularly interested in the four coverings. 'That's my spiritual history. I first learned Christ as a covert from the storm, then His blood as a Substitute - the Ram-skin ; then His righteousness on me - the Goat's-hair ; and then the royal dress - blue, purple, and scarlet ; our being made kings to God.' The Candlestick with its shaft of gold and branches : Christ and His people. The branches of equal length, proved by the Arch of Titus. God's people all alike before Him. The Shew-bread. Few know why it is called 'shew-bread.' It is 'presence-bread,' - bread handed out to us from God's own table. Curious to find most vague ideas, and those who have them very unwilling to let them be known. Thus about the Shew-bread, just as about the size and shape of the Ark. A Jew pointed out to me that I should have had the staves of the Ark in another position, protruding through the curtain a little, to show that the Ark was always there. We spoke of the twelve loaves, should they be piled one on the other, or laid along like tents pitched? He held the former way. 'But the Hebrews do not require that.' 'No.' 'Why then?' 'Our Rabbis say so.' 'But there is an objection to that, very strong. I was showing this model in a cottage, and put the question to a row of shrewd old women, whether the loaves should be piled up, or put the other way? At once one of them said, 'Not piled one on another.' 'Why?' 'They would mould before the end of the week.' 'What do you say to the old woman's difficulty?' 'Oh,' replied the Jew, 'she is a wise woman. She is so far right, but our Rabbis get over that by telling us that silver forks were put between each loaf, so that there was a current of air !' 'Then you are as bad as the Papists, you add to the written Word?' He had no reply but 'Our Rabbis think they have authority for it.' The Incense-Altar. A type, not of prayer, but of what makes prayer acceptable (Revelation 8:1-13). Christ is the Angel-messenger. His fragrant incense, the merit of His blood, on the four horns. Put on this altar your praises, your prayers, all your cups of cold water. The Veil, a door, a curtain-door. God's way out to us, and our way in to God. Christ, the Door, after being rent. When He died, the Veil was rent 'from top to bottom,' - God's work, not man's. The Cherubim, a whole history in itself. The word, 'carved form'=symbolic form. A type of the redeemed. (1) They stand on the Ark, and their feet on the blood. They cannot be angels. No angel needs the blood. (2) They are united to the Mercy-seat. No angel is so. Their eye is partly on the blood, and partly on each other. The copy of the Two Tables in the Ark. The Cherubim stand on righteousness, for the blood vindicates the broken law. The Two Tables=Christ's obedience. The Cherubim at the gate of Eden say, 'You, Adam and Eve, may get in again.' Grace at the very moment of their expulsion. The Shittim-wood boards fixed in the ransom-money by two tenons. A firm hold (q.d.), both hands. The Corner-boards, like the Corner-stone, on which one may stumble, but meant for far other ends. Perhaps not overlapping, but one of them projecting. The Rings ; (Exodus 26:24) a difficulty. 'They shall be doubled beneath (coupled together), and doubled at the head of it (coupled together above) into the one ring. It shall be alike for both of them. They shall be thus for the two corners ;' or rather, I think, 'they shall be twins below. Its top shall be twins fitting in to the one ring,' 'Its top' is the board in two leaves. The forty-eight Boards. If forty-nine, that would have been seven times seven, a complete number. But

the Church is not complete without its Head ; He makes it forty-nine, seven times seven. The Pillar-Cloud over all, day and night. At any hour might the Priest or Levite have light enough to go to any part of the courts, and the Pillar-Cloud would seem to point down to yon Altar!

Such are some of the results of a 'thought', but it was carried out, not left unused. Besides, to take one subject like this and master all the details is (1) Good discipline to the mind. (2) It gives one's-self confidence in teaching and applying. (3) It makes others trust you and receive your teaching more readily. And once more, - if the 'thought' has been for the glory of God, and not merely a pleasant exercise of mind, then it comes under the blessing : 'Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart' (2 Chronicles 6:8). THE WALK WITH GOD AS SHOWN IN THE TABERNACLE OF WITNESS 'Christ, the True Tabernacle' (Hebrews 8:2) (Suggested as a Programme for the Perth Conference)

I. THE COURTS (1) Christ, the Door of access to all we need in going to God.

Christ, the Door (Veil) into the Holy Place.

Christ, the Door (Veil) into the Holiest of all.

(2) The Altar. - The forgiveness we need found here. In Atonement (Leviticus 17:1-16) and Reconciliation (Ephesians 2:1-22).

Proclaimed (Acts 13:1-52) and Experienced (1 John 2:1-29).

(3) The Laver. - The purifying of the heart (Acts 15:9).

Daily washing (John 13:1-38). By the Spirit and the Word (Ephesians 5:26).

'Clean Hands.' 'Holy Hands.'

II. THE HOLY PLACE (1) The Shew-bread. - Life in Christ (John 6:35). Bread of God. The Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:24).

Partakers of the Lord's Supper (John 6:1-71).

(2) The Candlestick. - Light in Christ.

Christ and we spoken of as 'light'

(John 8:12 ;Matthew 5:14).

Given in the Gospel (2 Corinthians 4:4-6). Our walk in it (1 John 1:7).

(3) The Golden Altar. - Worship in Christ.

Christ the Intercessor (Hebrews 7:1-28).

Prayer sent through Him (Revelation 8:1-13).

Praise and thanks through Him (Hebrews 13:15).

III. THE HOLY OF HOLIES Holiness and Glory within the Veil (1) The Ark. - Christ in His Person (Colossians 2:3). In His doing the Father's will. 'The Law within His heart.' The Two Tables (Psalms 40:1-17). In His propitiatory suffering unto death. The blood sprinkled there (Romans

3:25).

(2) The Cherubim on the Ark, and united to it.

Union to Christ as well as rest in His Person, obedience, and blood.

(3) The Cherubim with their faces toward each other.

Brotherly love and fellowship (1 John 1:7).

(4) The Cloud of Glory between the Cherubim.

God in full communion with His redeemed and they with Him, and God dwelling with them (Revelation 21:3).

(5) Paradise thus more than restored ; the flaming sword sheathed ; the Cherubim in Eden ; the Tree of Life reached.

(6) Pot of Manna and Aaron’s Rod.

Reminiscences of ancient days - of God’s ways with us in the past - ’Days of Earth in Heaven !’

Chapter 151

S. The Word brought nigh to the sorrowful

The Word brought nigh to the sorrowful (From The Visitor’s Book of Texts. Chapter 4 from Part 3 " The Word brought nigh to the sorrowful") (In a few cases the wording of the Bible text will be found to differ from the Authorised Version. This is how it was printed originally, and is presumably intentional.)

Introduction Our errand being one of grace, the Lord will hear us when we ask his presence in it. Now, his Spirit is not "the spirit of fear :" it is the "spirit of love, and of power, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7). To be clothed with his Spirit ourselves, and to ask Him to impart to others what we ourselves have been furnished with, is our best preparation for dealing with the case before us.

We may take up some such passage as Genesis 21:17. "What aileth thee, Hagar? Fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is." Here is , 1. God’s interest in the cares and troubles of a servant-woman, or rather slave. 2. God takes such interest in such a case as even hers, that He sends an angel - aye, and no common angel; He sends "the Angel of the covenant," as appears by the context. 3. The Holy Ghost has recorded all this minutely, to teach us what to expect when we too are in a wilderness, losing our way, and trying to manage our own cares. Or we dwell upon Psalms 112:4. "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." A memorable text. 1. as surely as there is blue sky behind these dark clouds, so surely there is a gracious God and Father, though unseen, behind these distressing cares. 2. The past has given examples of light arising on darkness. 3. Your one duty is, to continue conscientiously and filially to fulfil His will, doing or suffering.

Perhaps we may occasionally, with advantage, refer to history or biography. What a simple yet powerfully instructive incident was that of the little child, who, seeing her mother’s tears while gazing shoreward from the ship that bore her amid strangers to a land of strangers, repeated (as she touched her mother’s hand), "Though I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, thy right hand shall hold me;" and then asked, "Is it true?"

Sorrowful - because of anxious forebodings and cares Psalms 37:23. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way."

1. The plan of that man’s life has been drawn up by the Lord, and He delights to see the plan carried out, step by step. 2. Each man’s history is a world’s history in miniature.

Numbers 14:11. "How long will this people provoke Me? How long will it be ere they believe Me, for all the signs that I have shewed among them?"

What! not trust Him with the future? He that has destroyed Pharaoh, is He not able to bring Anakims down? He that gave you His Spirit to bring you to know His Son (having given you His Son as your Saviour), what else will He hesitate to do for you?

Luke 12:29-32. "Seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after. And your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock, for it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

He that loveth you as to have ready for you the glorious kingdom, cannot but intend to keep you safe by the way. But strength is not promised to-day for the trials of to-morrow.

Romans 8:28. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

1. "All things?" yes, cares, perplexities, as well as other things. 2. They will help you on your progress. 3. They are in God's plan of your life - "according to His purpose." 4. Do not say, "If I were an eminent saint, I might fancy this to be so;" it belongs to all who "love God," i.e., who acquiesce in His will, who love the work and person of His Son, in whom the Father is revealed. 5. "We know" all this; we "know" it - it is most sure.

Proverbs 12:21. "There shall no evil happen to the just."

("If we are not secure from trials, we are secure from harm" - Cecil)

1. The just man in God's sight is the sinner made just, or justified, who now doeth justly - the sinner "in Christ, who walketh not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:1). 2. To this man, nothing but good ever comes. No condemnation, no wrath, no evil. 3. Trials, uncertainties, drive him nearer to God, and so become blessings.

Psalms 112:7. "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings : his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." The Good News takes the sting out of all that men call evil tidings. God's covenant-love sweetens the bitterest gall.

Psalms 61:2. "From the end of the earth will I cry unto Thee, when my heart is overwhelmed. Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I." That Rock can cast its shadow over the careful, fearful, foreboding man, as it did over that same man, when sin-oppressed, ready to sink under God's crushing wrath.

Php 4:6-7. "Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Luther called prayer "The leeches of his care.") 1 Peter 5:7. "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you."

1. It is not, cast away care, but "cast it on Christ." 2. It is, cast it all on Him. 3. Not one concern of yours is too small for Him. In creation, the smallest insect is cared for, and gets mysterious life, as certainly as the loftiest angel; and, in providence, His saints' minutest interest is attended to. "If it were not so, I would have told you" (John 14:2). 4. Let this sink into your heart, "He careth for you."

Jeremiah 17:7-8. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, . . . he shall not be careful in the year of drought."

Faith is the remedy for fear and care.

Mark 4:39-40. "The wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?"

1. You will see, when the storm is over, how unreasonable was your fear. 2. He that permits the storm to arise, can control it. 3. Fix your eye on Him; forget the winds and waves.

Jeremiah 10:23. "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself. It is not in him that walketh to direct his steps."

"If so, you need not wish to alter anything. God has chosen for you out of his endless stores the very best portion," - says one who knew care.

Psalms 32:1, Psalms 32:8. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. . . . I will instruct thee and teach thee the way which thou shalt go : I will guide thee with mine eye."

1. A pardoned man is one to whom guidance is promised. Why, then, should he be so careful and fearful? 2. He that sees how to get over the difficulties in the way of thy pardon, can He not get over the difficulties that lie in thy way through life?

Numbers 9:2, Numbers 9:18-22. "Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season. . . . .At the commandment of the Lord, the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched. Whether it were two days, or a week, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents and journeyed not; but when it was taken up, they journeyed."

1.Passover-men are the men whom the Lord will guide by His cloudy pillar. This is the connecting link between the first part of this chapter and the second. 2. They are not left to shift for themselves. 3. He often takes unexpected paths, and puts them to much inconvenience. 4. He thus trains their will.

Isaiah 42:16."I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."

Genesis 46:2-3. "God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob? And he said, Here am I. And He said, I am God! the God of thy father! Fear not to go down into Egypt." Genesis 46:4. "I will go down with thee into Egypt."

Psalms 94:18-19. "Thy mercy, O Lord, held me up. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, Thy comforts delight my soul."

1. "Mercy held him up" when his foot was slipping. Mercy ! mercy ! the very thing for my case. 2. God’s comforts were dropt into the stream of his anxious thoughts. Yes, the comforts of God !

Isaiah 50:10. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God."

1. Spoken to a real believer; i.e., to a sinner who feels the Lord’s majesty, and listens to the grace revealed by Messiah, "His Servant." 2. Spoken to such a one especially in times of affliction; for

the darkness here is that arising from outward things, as if calamities were equivalent to God’s frowns. 3. Let such a one fix his thoughts on "the name of the Lord;" i.e., the Lord’s manifested character, and the Lord’s gracious heart, and stay himself there, till "these calamities be overpast."

Genesis 32:7, Genesis 32:9, Genesis 32:11, Genesis 32:30. "Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed. And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham. . . .deliver me! And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."

1. It was always in anxious seasons that Jacob got his singular discoveries of God. This is one instance; but see also, Bethel, Genesis 28:11-12; and Bethel again, Genesis 35:5, Genesis 35:9, and Genesis 46:3-4. How seasonable is our God’s support! 2. If so, perplexities and forebodings may be but the folding-doors by which we are to see God come forth (as Jonathan came out to David from the thick wood) to comfort us.

Song of Solomon 4:8. "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon; look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions’ dens, from the mountains of the leopards."

1 Peter 5:10-11. "But the God of all grace, who hath called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

1. It is the God of grace that wishes us to suffer a while - the God who spared us every drop of penal suffering. 2. If so, these trials must be love-portions. 3. They will soon end. 4. They will contribute to our after completeness. The potter is handling and moulding the clay at present, and sometimes his hand seems rude as it shapes the vessel. 5. We shall yet sing "Glory" to him over these very sorrows; and "Dominion," too, rejoicing that he had the power to overrule.

2 Chronicles 20:12. "Neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon Thee."

It is He that drives the chariot - He alone. Do not try to help Him, but sit quiet in faith upon Him, and look what He will do. "The Lord, alone, did lead him" (Deuteronomy 32:12).

Psalms 25:15. "Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord; for He shall pluck my feet out of the net."

Job 9:34. "Let Him take His rod away from me."

"It is all one to have a burden taken off, and to have strength given to bear and patience to endure it." - Caryl.

Psalms 56:3. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee."

Daniel 3:17. "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace."

Isaiah 27:8. "He stayeth his rough wind in the day of his east wind."

He might have added bodily sickness to this trial, or the sickness of friends; He might have added excruciating pain; He might have added a hundred aggravations; but lo! He gives you just so much at a time as you can well bear, through His Spirit in you.

1 John 4:4. "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world."

Isaiah 27:7. "Hath He smitten him as He smote those that smote him?"

There is a wide difference between your afflictions and those of other men, if you are one of His people - even as there was between Israel’s chastisements and Pharaoh’s doom.

Psalms 140:7. "O Lord God, the strength of my salvation! Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle."

Psalms 42:7. "All thy waves and billows are gone over me."

It is God’s waves. "Tides of love springing out of the ocean of God’s love! so that they cannot overwhelm, but only plunge us in its unfathomable depths." - (A. Newton’s Memoirs) Luke 10:1-42. "Nothing shall by any means hurt you."

Spoken to the seventy - to all whose names are written in heaven. Jesus promises, 1. Nothing shall hurt a disciple ! 2. Nothing shall hurt a disciple, come in what shape it may, and though Satan try to wield it - "Nothing by any means"

Chapter 152

S. The napkin about Christ's Head

The napkin about Christ’s Head.

’And the napkin, that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself ’

John 20:7 Why ’wrapped together in a place by itself ’?

Because Jesus wished to show that He arose calmly: no haste, no hurry, not as if in flight from the tomb, but in solemn triumph and at leisure. So He wishes His people to be calm. ’He that believeth shall not make haste.’ Yes, and see! He folded the napkin neatly and laid it by. But far more. That napkin had been put there by Joseph and Nicodemus. Christ very likely was as beautiful as Moses, but His face had been marred by suffering. After His death the beauty all returned, and that was why they did not cover His face with a napkin, as John 11:44. Seeing the bleeding wounds caused by the crown of thorns, they carefully and tenderly drew the napkin round His brow. When Jesus awoke on the third day He noticed this act of kindness, and folded up the napkin and laid it in a place by itself, as indeed precious to Him, because it told the tenderness of their care for Him. They will hear more about this napkin when He returns.

Thus He cares for the smallest acts of kindness we do for Him and to Him; how much more for what we do under difficulties and in suffering, and not least, for our efforts to win souls.

Chapter 153

S. The resurrection of the Son of the Widow of Sarepta

The resurrection of the Son of the Widow of Sarepta.

1 Kings 17:1-24

'To this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.'

(Romans 14:9)

There never was a resurrection in the world or in the Church of Christ before this one. Yet it is a resurrection in very quiet circumstances. The Lord does not make a work about His wonders, for what are wonders to Him? Sarepta was a town of Syro-Phoenicia. I have sometimes thought that the Syro-Phoenician woman belonged to this place. I should not wonder but that the Lord had gone out of the coasts of Israel in order to see it. I remember it, forty years ago. It was a place of villas for the people of Tyre. On this account the woman would spread the news all the better among the Gentiles there. But let us keep to the story of the widow. Christ refers to it, showing He had read it carefully, as setting forth the sovereignty of God. Let us look at

I. This incident as bearing on the widow.- She must have had some acquaintance with the Hebrew truth and the Hebrew prophets, for when Elijah appeared to her in the name of his God she was not at all surprised, but put faith in the God of Israel. First her faith was tried, then it was rewarded. 'Her barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail.' Would you risk anything in faith for the Lord? Are you conscious that you often do things simply because you believe they are God's will? Did you ever do so without being rewarded? It is not like the Lord to forget those who do anything for Him.

One day this woman's son sickened and died. Could there be a greater affliction to a widowed mother? Is this the reward of faith? No doubt she hazarded a great deal in taking in a Hebrew prophet into her house, and is this the way the Lord rewards her? No doubt Elijah prayed for her son; yet he died. It is remarkable how it affected her. 'Thou hast brought my sin to remembrance.' How affliction brings sin to remembrance! It is one of the Lord's ways of convincing of sin in the case of His own people. If you let the Spirit of the Lord work in you it will always have this effect, and a most blessed effect it is. The Lord wanted to humble the woman. Perhaps she was getting a little proud of her barrel of meal. Ay, and perhaps she was beginning to feel that she deserved it, for taking the prophet into her house. The Lord drives all this out of her. But still, is it kind to do this to a believing woman? 'God is not unrighteous to forget your work of faith, in that ye ministered to the saints (Hebrews 6:10). Now she has ministered to the saints. Well, God has rewarded her, and this is His way of preparing a greater reward - a kindness such as had never been granted to a saint since the Flood, before or after. You see the Lord empties before He fills. When you are overtaken by some bitter grief, say, 'Now I know the way of the Lord. He is preparing something better for me.' It ended in the widow's son being given back to her from the grave. 'Now I know,' she says, 'that thou art a man of God.' Did she not know that before? Yes, but have you not

noticed that there are times when the truth we know is lighted up as with a flame? I referred to walking forty years ago on the shore at Sarepta. I well remember how Mr. M'Cheyne and I used to say to one another, as we walked in other parts of Palestine with our Bibles in our hands, 'We believed the Bible before, but now we believe it more than ever.' Some of you have felt this after a time of affliction.

II. This incident as bearing on Elijah. - I think Elijah was a little stumbled at first. He seems not to have known what to say. 'Give me thy son.' He goes up to his upper room, and there he is, alone with the dead child. You see what he is about. He speaks to the Lord for him, not to his mother. Three times he cried. It often puts me in mind of our Lord's words, 'Ask, seek, knock.' 'Asking' is when we pray, but 'seeking' is more earnest still, and 'knocking' is more and more in earnest. Elijah had never heard of a resurrection before, but he does not hesitate to ask this of the Lord. You see we may ask Him to do greater things than He has ever done yet. Don't confine yourself to the same things over and over again. I think Elijah took a hint from former things done for him. There was heaven, sealed and opened again, - there was the barrel of meal not spent. 'Lord, Lord, do greater things!' What a simple resurrection, done so quickly, done in a private house, done in an upper room. I don't know that men would hear of it till long afterwards. The heathen would not believe the woman's story. The Lord likes to do great things, if we would not make a great noise about them. Let them tell their own story. I think the Lord was preparing Elijah for greater things still. We may in this respect compare him to David slaying the lion and the bear by faith. When we are dealing with the Lord we always act on this principle, 'greater still, greater still.' Here is the man who was never to die used by God to bring life to one who was dead. God let him look into the cavern of death, and see how He could bring back from death. And the Lord was teaching His servant in his retirement what He could do for a dead nation. When the Lord gives you any remarkable visit in your retirement He means you to use it. We need a great awakening. God does not want us to be content with what we have got. Have you cried to the Lord for the quickening of souls as earnestly as Elijah cried for the quickening of life in that dead lad? If we were intensely in earnest we would see reviving.

Chapter 154

S. What gives assurance

What gives assurance.

[This was originally a sermon preached at Ferryden, during the awakening in the end of 1859. It was thought to be useful in disentangling the perplexities of some anxious souls; and this gave rise to the request for its publication. (This address was published by Messrs. Chas. Glass and Co., Glasgow.) It is very interesting to notice how, in such times of awakening, the spiritual instincts imparted to the new-born soul by the Holy Ghost seek out the truth. One day, in a fisherman's house, we found two females sitting together with the Assembly's Shorter Catechism in their hands. They were talking over the questions on 'Justification and 'Adoption,' and were comparing these with some of the 'benefits which accompany or flow from them,' namely, 'assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' They were themselves happy in the calm assurance of the love of God; but a neighbour had somewhat perplexed them by insisting that they had no right to assurance until they could point to sanctifcation showing itself in their after-lives. On the other hand, those two souls could not see why they should wait till then; for if they had been 'justified,' and had a 'right to all the privileges of the sons of God,' they might at once have 'assurance of God's love.' This incident falls in with the strain of the following discourse.]

Many are the persons who have envied Isaiah, to whom personally the messenger from the throne said, 'Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged' (Isaiah 6:7). They are ready to say, 'Oh, if we heard the same.' Many are the persons who have envied Daniel, to whom the Lord said, 'Thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days' (Daniel 12:13). Daniel was thus assured of the future; with him it was to be rest at death, and a lot, or portion (Joshua 15:1; Joshua 16:1), in the inheritance of the saints on the morning of the resurrection of the just. And so also have such persons wished that their case were that of the man to whom, directly and personally, Jesus said, 'Son, thy sins are forgiven thee' (Mark 2:5); and that of the woman in Simon's house, whose ear heard the blessed declaration, 'Thy sins are forgiven' (Luke 7:48); or even that of the thief 'To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise' (Luke 23:43). These sinners were all of them personally certified of pardon and acceptance, and we are ready to think that it would be the height of happiness for ourselves to have, like them, a declaration of our personal forgiveness sounding in our ear.

Now, ere we have finished our subject, we may be able (if the Lord, the Spirit, lead us into the truth set forth in the Word) to see that, after all, we may be as sure and certain of our pardon and acceptance as any or all of these - as sure as Isaiah, Daniel, the palsied man, the woman-sinner, the dying thief, and, let us add, as sure of it as Paul was of Clement and other fellow-labourers having their names in the Book of Life (Php 4:3). Nay, we may even discover that our certainty is in all respects higher than theirs was, being founded on something far better than one single announcement, which, in the lapse of time, might lose very much of its distinctness and of its power.

Oh, how blessed to be able to point heavenward and say, 'It is mine ! ' - to point to the throne and say, 'He is mine who sitteth there ' - to look back and find your name in the Book of Everlasting

Love ! - to look forward to the opening of the Book of Life, knowing that your name is in it ! - to be able to anticipate resurrection, and to sing 'I know that safe with Him remains, Protected by His power, What I've committed to His trust, Till the decisive hour.

Then will He own His servant's name Before His Father's face, And in the New Jerusalem Appoint my soul a place.'

We begin by noticing that Assurance is far oftener spoken of than sought for.

Many may be said, in a vague sense, to wish for it, who, after all, do not seek after it. Not a few of our communicants, men of knowledge and good attainment, men of high Christian profession, are rather disposed to evade the question, Are you sure of your salvation? They are content to go on in uncertainty. Some of these even spurn from them the idea of any one having full Assurance, branding the idea as Presumption. They quite mistake the meaning of Presumption, which is claiming what we have not been invited to, and are not warranted to take. They do not see that there can be no presumption in our taking whatever our God has invited us to accept; and that, on the other hand, if we decline taking what our God presents to us, we are assuming to ourselves a right to judge of the fitness and wisdom of His proceedings.

Such persons are not in right earnest about salvation and the favour of God. They take things easy. They admit that they may die to-day or to-morrow, and that they do not certainly know what is to become of them and yet they are making no effort to ascertain. They admit that the favour of God is the soul's real portion, and that they, as yet, cannot speak of that being their enjoyment; and yet they coolly go on day after day without anxious inquiry regarding it.

There are others who, from a wrong religious training, go on in a sort of doubt and fear, cherishing the idea that these doubts and fears are salutary checks to pride, and that they are, on the whole, as safe with the hope that all is right, as they would be with the certainty.

We generally find that these persons are misled by confounding things that differ. They perhaps quote to you, 'Happy is the man that feareth always (Proverbs 28:14), not perceiving that the fear there is the 'fear of the Lord,' in which there is 'strong confidence '(Proverbs 14:26). Or, perhaps, they quote the unhappy experience of some godly men who died without speaking anything about assurance - not knowing that those godly men longed for certainty, and reckoned it so desirable that their very estimate of its preciousness made them jealous of admitting that they themselves might be partakers thereof. But the truth is, in many cases, these persons do not care for the close fellowship of God into which Assurance leads the soul. They do not wish to bask in the beams of divine love. They wish merely to be safe at last. But if you would see how entirely different is the effect of a merely hoped-for impunity from that of certainty in regard to divine favour, read these two passages, Deuteronomy 29:19 and 1 John 3:3. In the former case the sinner says, 'I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst;' in the latter he says, 'Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.'

[Let it be observed that in the New Testament the grace of hope does not imply doubt, but signifies the expectation of the things yet future. Hence, the hope in 1 John 3:3 was thus stated in 1 John 3:2, ' We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him. Old writers used to quote a Latin saying, 'Hope, as used of earthly things, is a word for a good that is uncertain; hope, as used of heavenly things, is a word for good that is most sure.]

Once more, then, on this point let us ask attention to the fact that in the New Testament we have no encouragement given to doubts and uncertainties. The believers there are spoken of continually as having the joy of knowing the Saviour as theirs. No doubt there were in those days some believers who were not fully assured; but these were not meant to be any rule to us, now that the Sun of Righteousness has risen so gloriously; and, accordingly, no notice is taken of their case. On the other hand, we are ever meeting with such words as these, spoken in the name of all disciples, 'We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God'(2 Corinthians 5:1). 'We know that we have passed from death unto life.' 'We know that we are of God' (1 John 3:14 and 5:19). 'I know whom I have believed' (2 Timothy 1:12).

[The late Dr. Sievewright of Markinch, in a sermon upon Eph. 1: 53, has remarked: 'In those primitive times an apostle could take for granted of a whole church that they all trusted. For, in writing to the Ephesians, does Paul make a single allusion to their unbelief? Or, does he employ a single exhortation in the way of persuasion to believe? Or, from beginning to end of his Epistle, does he hint at such a thing as prevailing distrust? No; in those days Christian men no more thought of refusing to trust in the Saviour than of denying the Word of Truth. But now, is it not a frequent case that a man shall go by a Christian name, and practise Christian duties, and receive Christian privileges, for years together, while he is so far from trusting in Christ with the confidence of faith, that he shall not only confess himself destitute of truth, but often express a fear lest full trust and confidence were an unwarranted and dangerous presumption? How strange this would have sounded in the apostles time, when to trust in Christ, and to trust fully and for all salvation, was the very first exercise to which they called those who were awakened to seek in earnest for eternal life, and received the record of God concerning the way. The remarkable trust of the first Christians gave a perfection to their character we now seldom perceive.] But it is time to speak of what gives Assurance. Of course, we understand that this blessing, like the other blessings of salvation, every one, is the free gift of a sovereign God. It is the 'God of hope' who gives it 'through the power of the Holy Ghost' (Romans 15:13). But our present point of inquiry is, In what way does it please Him to give it to souls? All agree that Christ's person and work furnish the materials and groundwork of a sinner's acceptance, peace, assurance. 'Peace (says Isaiah 32:17) 'is the fabric reared by righteousness; yea, the office of righteousness is to give quietness and assurance for ever.' But there is a difference of opinion and practice as to the way of using these ample materials. We begin with speaking of what we may call, First, The indirect or long way.

Those who try this way set themselves to ascertain 'What am I?' They seek to make sure that they have the marks and evidences of being new creatures in Christ, or at least the marks and evidences of having, beyond doubt, believed in Him. Divines have been wont to call this mode of Assurance 'the Assurance of sense,' because in it the person points to sensible proofs of his new nature, and thinks he may some time or other be able to show such an experience of divine things as puts it beyond doubt that he has believed and has found Christ. It is quite wrong, however, to apply the scriptural term 'Assurance of hope' to this experimental sort of certainty; for Scripture means the assured belief and expectation of things yet future, by that expression. We may call it, for clearness sake, Assurance got by seeing effects produced. Divines often describe it as Assurance derived from the reflex acts of the soul.

(a) One form which this pursuit of Assurance in the long or indirect way takes, is this, - it leads the person to put much stress on his own act of believing. In this case the person being much

concerned about his state towards God, and fearful of mistaking the matter, says to himself 'I know that all assurance of salvation depends on my believing in Christ, and I think I believe; but what if I be deceiving myself as to my supposed believing?' Haunted by this thought, he sets himself to remedy the danger by trying to convince himself that he has believed. And in order to make himself sure that he has faith, he resolves not to be satisfied till he sees the full fruits of faith. He puts such stress on his own act of believing, that he will not be content until he sees, by such effects as hypocrites could not imitate, that his was genuine faith.

Now, we say to such - You are not taking the best way to have real fruit; for you are seeking fruit and effect from a selfish motive; you are not seeking holiness as an end, and for its own sake, but in order to use it as an evidence in favour of your sincerity. This kind of fruit is not likely to be the best, nor the most satisfactory. We say again - You are putting Assurance far off. It can only be at some distant future day that you arrive at any certainty by your method; for such fruits as you seek cannot be visible very soon. But we say again - You are by this method taking off your eye from Christ to a great degree. For you try to believe, and then you look into yourself to see if you have believed. You look up to the Brazen Serpent, and then you take off your eye to examine your wound, and to see if the bites are really healing, that so you may be sure you have looked aright! Would a bitten Israelite have put such stress on his own poor act of looking? You are looking at Christ, and then looking away from Him to yourself You are like a gardener who, after planting a tree or flower in rich soil, might be foolish enough to uncover the soil in order to see if the root had struck, and was really imbibing the moisture. Surely, better far to let the root alone, having once ascertained the richness of the soil, and allow the plant to spread out its leaves to the warmth of the sun. Keep looking on Christ, and the effects cannot fait to follow.

(b) Another form that this same indirect method takes is somewhat similar. Those who adopt it do not expect Assurance at the outset, and say that it is presumption and pride in young believers to speak of being sure of their interest in Christ; for where is there time for them to have experience, or exhibit fruits? Such persons think that ripe, mature fruits of holiness alone entitle any one to say, 'I know that I am in Christ.' If we might so speak, they do not allow the newly engrafted branch (though really engrafted by the Heavenly Husbandman) to say, 'I am in the vine,' - no, they say, wait till you have borne fruit, and then when the clusters appear on your boughs, you may be entitled to say, 'I am in the vine.' But not till then.

It is a favourite argument with such that in 1 John 3:14 the Apostle John says, 'We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. But this does not prove that this is the only way of knowing that we are passed from death unto life. It only shows that an aged and experienced saint like John thought it good sometimes to bring forward his own and his fellow-believers brotherly love as a marked and unmistakable feature of their Christian character. It is very much as if he had said, 'We believers know each other, as having passed from death unto life, by the love that fills our hearts toward each other.' He is not speaking to the question, 'Is this the first, or is it the only trustworthy way by which you know your interest in Christ?' Surely; so far from that being the case, John would at once have said that he himself found rest in knowing the love of Him who begat before he discerned in himself any love to those begotten of Him. The truth is, this long and indirect way is properly the way by which others ascertain your standing in Christ. But there is another way for the person's self, of which we are yet to speak. Also; this way is good even for the person's self as confirmatory of the short and direct way, of which we are yet to

speak. But still we say, if it were the only way, then farewell to gospel-joy, except in the very rarest cases. For, the more a soul grows in grace, the more that the believing man rests in Christ and drinks into His spirit, just the more dissatisfied does he become with all his fruits; his holiness does not please him; he finds defects in it; he finds it mixed and impure; and the longer he lives the life of faith, he gets more and more keen-sighted in detecting blemishes in his graces.

[John Newton, in his sermon 'Of the Assurance of Faith,' remarks: 'If inherent sanctification, or a considerable increase of it, be considered as the proper ground of Assurance, those who are most humble, sincere, and desirous of being conformed to the will of God, will be the most perplexed and discouraged in their search after it. For they, of all others, will be the least satisfied with themselves, and have the quickest sense of innumerable defilements.] So that it is difficult indeed to say when a growing believer, ever jealous of himself; will accumulate such a heap of this gold, such an amount of really holy living, as will put beyond doubt, to his own mind, that he is a man between whom and Christ there exists the bond of union. If good works or holiness must be waited for ere faith can be known to be genuine, when are we to expect to attain to an amount or quality sufficiently satisfying?

If this were the only way of Assurance, we could not wonder that many should speak of it as necessarily a very rare attainment, and even as all but impossible. This, however, is not the only way; and we now turn from this way to the other, quoting as we turn to it, the statement of the old Puritan writer, Brooks: 'Many of God's dear people are so taken up with their own hearts, and duties, and graces, that Christ is little regarded by them, or minded; and what is this but to be more taken up with the streams than with the fountain? with the bracelets, and ear-rings, and gold-chains, than with the husband? with the nobles than with the king?' [Brook's Cabinet, p.393.] And then he adds, 'Dear Christian, was it Christ or was it your graces, gracious evidences, gracious dispositions, gracious actings, that trod the wine-press of the Father's wrath?' And once more: 'These persons forget their grand work, which is immediate closing with Christ, immediate embracing of Christ, immediate relying, resting, staying upon Christ.'

Let us turn, then, to the Second, The direct or short way.

They who take this way, set themselves to ascertain, 'Who and what Christ is.' The Holy Spirit, we believe, delights very specially to use this way, because it turns the eye of the sinner so completely away from self to the Saviour.

What we call the direct and short way, is that in which We are enabled by the Spirit at once to look up to Christ, the Brazen Serpent, and to be satisfied in looking on Him. This simple, direct Assurance is got by what we discern in Christ Himself; not by what we discover about ourselves. It is got by what we believe about Christ; not by what we know about our own act of faith. We may know nothing about our own soul's actings in believing, and yet we may so know Him on whom we believe as to find ourselves altogether at rest. In a word, this direct and immediate Assurance is found by my discovering that Christ, God-man, is the very Saviour for my needs and wants, my sins and corruptions; while all the time I may never be once troubled about the question, Am I sure that I believe, and that my act of faith possesses the right quality.

I find it when the Spirit is taking the things of Christ, and showing them to my soul; and I do not need to wait till He next shows me what is in me. Let us explain the matter more fully.

I have Assurance that God accepts me the moment I see the fulness and freeness of Christ's work. My soul is enabled to see all the claims of justice satisfied at the cross; for there is complete obedience, there is the full penalty paid. At the cross there is room for any sinner, and the gospel invites me as a sinner among the rest to hear what the cross says. Does it not say to me, 'God-man has provided an infinitely perfect righteousness, and made it honourable for the holy God to embrace the Prodigal Son. Yonder, in the work of God-man, is a rock for the sinner's feet to stand upon - and this not a mere narrow point, hardly sufficient, but rather a wide continent, stretching out on every side.' Surely there is room for me there? I feel it is enough! Self is forgotten in presence of this marvellous scene. What could satisfy the conscience better! What could speak peace like this! This is faith rising into Assurance while simply continuing to behold its glorious object. And now, if any one try to disturb me by this suggestion, 'How do you know that you are really believing what you recognise as so suited to your need ?' - my reply is simply this, 'How do I know that I see the sun when I am in the act of gazing upon him in the splendour of his setting?' That glowing sky, and that globe of mild but ineffable glory cannot be mistaken, if anything is sure to the human vision. The believer's own consciousness (quickened of course by the Spirit) is sufficient, in presence of the cross, to assure him that he a sinner, is most certainly welcome to the bosom of the Holy One, who, pointing to the 'It is finished, cries, 'Return to me, for I have redeemed thee.

[Samuel Rutherford, in a sermon on Luke 8:22, says 'When I believe in Christ, that instinct of the grace of God, stirred up by the Spirit of God, maketh me know that I know God, and that I believe, and so that I am in Christ, to my own certain apprehension. He then adds, that 'this does not hinder other inferior evidences.']

Just look at it again. Your soul hears that the Father is well pleased with the full atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son. He condemns and rejects all your works, all your efforts, and your guilty person; but when his Son, our Substitute, appears, then His obedience and His suffering unto death are found -~ most glorifying to the Holy One and His holy law. While you are pondering the Father's delighted rest in Christ, who thus wrought all for us, your soul is 'like the chariots of Amminadib;' in a moment, you feel your conscience has got rest, as if a voice from that atoning work had said, 'Peace, be still.' Your sins, placed in God's balance, were outweighed by Christ's infinite merit; and if so, your sins in your own balance are no less surely outweighed by the same weight of immense merit. What satisfies God, satisfies you.

Thus faith, as it gazes on its object, passes on to full Assurance. And if now, again, any one seek to disturb your calm rest by asking, 'Are you quite sure that you do really believe what is giving you such rest ?' - what other reply could you give but this, 'As well ask me, when I am enjoying and revelling in the glories of the setting sun, Are you sure your eye really sees that sun which you so admire?'

I sit down and meditate on such a passage as John 3:16, 'God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' The Spirit enables me to see in these words God testifying that no more is needed for my acceptance with God than what is found in Christ: and all that Christ has done becomes mine upon my believing in Him. Relying on God's testimony, I ask no questions, I wait for nothing in myself (such as love, sorrow, or other feeling), but I think on what is in Christ, as the ground of my

peace. And when I so muse, the fire burns - my soul is at rest.

[Halyburton (Mem, chap.2. p.3) says: 'A sweet and comfortable hope and persuasion of my own salvation was answerable to the clearness of the discovery of the way of salvation. The hope rose in strength, or grew weak, as the discoveries of the way of salvation were more or less clear and strong.] And if now, any one disturbs, or threatens to disturb, my calm enjoyment of my Father's love by hinting, 'You should first, ere ever you venture to rest, be sure that you are really believing the things that are making you so glad;' my reply to such an unseasonable interruption might be somewhat in the style of a writer who uses the following illustration : - Suppose a nobleman condemned for high treason, and the day has come when he must die. But that morning a document is put into his hand; it is a pardon from the king, on no other terms than that he accept it. He reads; as he reads, his countenance is flushed, his eye glistens, and in a moment he is full of joy. What think you of any one arresting the current of his joy by the suggestion, 'Are you quite sure you are accepting the pardon? Is your act of acceptance complete and thorough?' No; the man is engrossed with the certainties presented to his thoughts, viz., what the king freely gives to him; and these certainties convey their own impression to his soul - to wit, the certainty of his pardon.

Such is the direct way of Assurance. We called it a short and an immediate way. Is it not so? We said, too, at the beginning, that it might turn out that, after all, we had a way of knowing our pardon and acceptance, superior in many respects to that by which on one occasion it was conveyed to Isaiah, and on another to Daniel, and on another to the palsied man, and to the woman-sinner, and to the thief. We still adhere to our statement. For our way of knowing our acceptance, you see, is one that rests on unalterable facts, the significance of which cannot pass away or decay. If it decay from our souls for a time, we can revive it again by a renewed study of the facts that produced it at the first. Whereas the one utterance that assured Isaiah, Daniel, and those others mentioned, might in process of time be found to fade somewhat in its vividness; and then the individual might say to himself; 'Ah, what if I have over-estimated the meaning of the utterance! or what if I have forgot it in part? or what if my subsequent unworthiness have cancelled the promise?' In a dull, self-reproaching mood of mind, such a partial obliteration from the mind or memory of a single, solitary announcement is quite a possible occurrence; not to refer to other abatements, such as that the person in a case like Isaiah's might say to himself; 'What if it referred only to the past, but does not include what has happened since then?' But, on the other hand, our way of ascertaining now our pardon and acceptance rests on unchanging and unchangeable facts - facts for ever illustrious, facts for ever rich in meaning, facts for ever uttering the same loud, distinct, full testimony to the sinner's soul. Yes, we have an altar, and the voice from that altar and its four horns may be heard distinctly from day to day as at first. Our altar is Christ; and this Christ died, rose again, went back to the Father, is interceding for us. These are the four horns of our altar! Let us take hold of any one of them, and lo! we see an accepted sacrifice before us, a sacrifice that speaks peace, that leads our conscience to rest, and makes our hearts leap for joy; for God is well pleased. We have God's Word reiterating in manifold ways a testimony to be believed; and so we find security against Satan's whispered suspicions. And should any one object, 'Surely there have been many, very many good men and eminent men of God who did not take this short and direct way;' let us remind such as may stumble at this fact (for it is a fact) of an anecdote which good old Brooks has recorded.{Cabinet, p.115] A minister, who had great joy in

Christ, said on his death~bed regarding his peace and quietness of soul, 'That he enjoyed these not from having a greater measure of grace than other Christians had, nor from any special immediate witness of the Spirit, but because he had more clear understanding of the covenant of grace.' O Spirit of truth, give all Thy servants this clear understanding of the covenant of grace! Nor must we fail to notice that this immediate, direct way is that which specially honours God and His beloved Son, inasmuch as it magnifies free grace. Here is the Lord's free love manifesting itself as so exceedingly free that he will not ask the price of one moment's waiting or delay. Behold the cross, and at once be at rest! The excuses of the delaying sinner are swept away. Why wait, since all is ready? and where is there room for the plea that God's time for favour, and so great a favour as that of making you sure of acceptance, may not have come? God in Christ waits for you, presenting and proffering to you an immediate welcome, immediate peace.

[It is a very common mistake to allege that God sometimes counsels us to wait. But, if wait be used in the sense of delay, or putting off immediate decision, we assert there is no passage in the Bible to countenance such an idea. Some quote Psalms 40:1, 'I waited patiently - for the Lord, which is (see the margin), 'In waiting, I waited,' or 'I eagerly waited.' Now, not to insist on the fact that here the speaker is Christ our surety, we must remember that the Old Testament use of 'wait' has not in it anything of the idea of procrastination, or delay, or contented waiting in our sense of the term. It always means eager looking, as when a dog looks up to his master's table for the crumbs, or as when the people waited for the priest coming out of the Holy Place, or as in Job 29:23, the anxious, intensely anxious, looking out for rain in sultry weather. This is the meaning, Micah 7:8, 'I will wait for the God of my salvation.' This is the meaning, Habakkuk 2:3, 'Though it tarry, wait for it;' that is, if you do not see these things come to pass at once, if you do not see at once the Lord appear in His glory to overthrow His foes, yet look out for it anxiously! eagerly hasten on to that day. This is the way in which God's people 'wait,' spoken of in Psalms 130:6; Isa. 11:31. And so Lamentations 3:26 is the case of the desolate soul in affliction, earnestly looking up and looking out for deliverance, though calm and resigned. Scriptural waiting is not in the least like that of the careless, easy-minded soul, that pretends it is unwilling to anticipate sovereign grace. And when God himself, in Isa.30:58, is said to 'wait to be gracious,' the same idea of eager, earnest looking is implied. It is the intensely anxious waiting of the Prodigal's Father for the return of his son, for whose coming He is ever on the outlook. Most certainly, there is nothing in Scripture that countenances an unbelieving waiting for faith.] What say you then, unassured soul? Are you still content?

Assurance may be got in beholding steadfastly the Lamb of God and is there no sin in your refusing to behold Him steadfastly?

Want of Assurance leaves you in the awful position of being, on your own showing, possibly still a child of Satan! And can you remain thus without alarm? And the world is passing away. You are dying men. Christ is coming quickly, coming as a thief in the night, coming in an hour that you think not; and you are not ready to meet Him at His coming. There are not less than 8o,ooo of our fellow-men dying every day; 8o,ooo have died today, 8o,ooo more shall die to-morrow, and you may be one of that number whom the scythe of death shall cut down as grass - and yet you are content to have only a vague hope! Content to be without Assurance! You are like the unhappy philosopher who said, 'I have lived uncertain, I die doubtful, I know not whither I am going.' Are things to continue thus with you any longer? Do the visions of an eternal hell never rise up before

you? Are you never struck with cold fear lest hell be waiting for you? Mirth is most unsuitable for you; laughter is out of season; peace cannot take up her abode under your roof, for you are all at sea about your eternal interests! Yes, you may be almost past all the joy that you are ever to find! Will you not now stand still, and once more examine Christ crucified, Christ's finished work, to see if that cannot yield you the present and eternal peace which alone can satisfy the soul? We have sought to set all before you; and now we leave you, praying that the Holy Spirit may give efficacy to our words, knowing well that otherwise all is vain :

'Let all the promises before him stand, And set a Barnabas at his right hand, These in themselves no comfort can afford;

'Tis Christ, and none but Christ, can speak the word.'

Chapter 155

S. Winning Christ

Winning Christ.

'..and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.'

Php 3:8 For a man to have 'won Christ,' in the scriptural sense of the term, would be the same thing as 'already attained,' and as 'already perfect.' So Christ is this subject, 'Winning Christ.' Why, then, attempt to handle so great a subject? We seek to be enabled, by the grace and Spirit of God, to point out what a pursuit it is, that all may engage in it for themselves. The Alpine guide can take the traveller to a point from which he will see the scenery of the prospect that is so immense; but he does not undertake to look for the traveller. If I had been a shepherd lad at Bethlehem in the day when Christ was born, I could have done what the star did for the wise men. I could have said, 'There is the spot where the babe new-born King of the Jews is lying,' and then have left it to themselves to go in and gaze, and drink in the mystery of godliness which was before them. That is all we do in speaking of 'winning Christ.'

1. 'Winning Christ' is not finding Christ, nor is it being found in Christ. These are the two extremes. The one is the starting-point, and the other - being found in Him - is the goal. But between these two lies the 'winning Christ.' Paul, who uses that expression in Php 3:8, at the time he so wrote, had been about thirty years in Christ. Thirty years before, he had found Christ, and Christ had found him, on the road to Damascus. He had been the ringleader of self-righteousness, a man who, of all sinners in the world, was the most determined enemy of Jesus, the righteous One. How he was arrested on the road to Damascus, how for three days he lay in darkness, feeling what he was as a sinner, is known to all. Any one passing up the street called Strait, might hear from that house groanings as of a deadly wounded man. It is Saul of Tarsus, into whose soul God's arrows have sunk. But at the end of the three days it pleased God to reveal His Son in Him. He got such a discovery of Christ that, from that hour, he never took off his eye, but lived his life 'looking unto Jesus.' He saw in Him what made him lose all conceit of whatever he had known of earthly glory. Has there been such a time in your life? Can every one who reads these lines say, 'There has been in my lifetime a period, when I was made to know that hitherto I had been blind, and then was made to see the Lord Jesus all my righteousness, all my strength?'

After that day it was Paul's constant aim to go on in Christ; that he might be found in Him when the Lord should call him, or come for him. He went on in this pursuit of Christ, never taking his eye off Him. If you had met him the third day after that wonderful change, you would have found him gazing upon Christ, and discovering new glory in Him. Had you met him thirty years after, when he penned the words which the Holy Ghost gave him, 'That I may win Christ,' you would have seen him still gazing on the same Christ. He had not changed the object of his gaze, and he meant to continue thus till he was 'found in Christ.'

Very often it happens in the experience of believers who are running this race, that they fail, after a few years, to see what Paul saw in Christ. Sometimes they begin to look aside to something they have done. Very often you find a believing man, insensibly, unconsciously, trusting in his trust. Another is getting spiritually proud, though not aware of it - he fancies he has attained to some superior grace, and is no longer satisfied with what he began with. He is not quite content with seeing in Christ the same that he saw at the first,- 'Christ made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him' - Christ 'made a curse for us,' that the blessing might come down on us without stint or measure. He begins to turn aside a little from this truth. Just as if the prodigal, after having been a little while at his father's table, wearing the best robe, feeding on the fatted calf, had begun to wish he had, besides what his father furnished, some by-table of his own, not caring to be wholly indebted, as at the first, to his father's bounty and love. There is a tendency of this kind in us all. In various ways it manifests itself ; and hence it is that we, believers, need to be 'winning Christ' every day, and every hour of the day if we would escape this tendency. It was because Paul was always 'winning Christ' that he never deviated from the straight path.

2. The word 'winning' is the same as gaining. 'If a man should gain the whole world.' It is also used for merchants gaining by their trade ; so that the meaning of winning Christ is, gaining out of Christ the riches that are in Him, the wealth that is stored up in Him. It is an interesting fact, that in Wales and in Scotland, in the mining districts, 'winning' the coal, or the mineral, is a common expression, by which they mean, sinking a shaft deep down to get out the ore in richer abundance. Let us take that idea. Paul, on the day when he first discovered Christ, found himself to be the possessor of a large estate. He was standing, so to speak, at the opening of this mine, and he saw some of the precious ore. He could not take his eye off what he did see ; but the more he looked, the more he discovered of the inexhaustible riches there. He had only to dig down, to sink his shaft in all directions, and there was no end to what he might bring up out of this mine, and so it was his lifetime's wish, 'that I may win Christ.' When he had got some of this ore, he was inflamed with a desire to get more. He would stand amid the heaps of his gold and say, 'That I may win Christ! This is my heart's desire, my life's end and aim.' Is it yours? Have you discovered that there are riches in Christ such as those we speak of? An eminent preacher in other days, Dr. Conyers, began his ministry out of Christ. Christ was unknown to him, except by name. But on one occasion, in the lesson of the day, he read the words, 'The unsearchable riches of Christ.' Unsearchable riches ! These two words caught his attention during the service; and when he went home, he opened his Greek Bible, that he might see if those actually were the terms - if those English terms really expressed the original. He saw they did; that the word 'unsearchable' was a word that meant, 'that could not be searched out.' The thought arose in his heart, 'Then I have been in ignorance of Christ all my lifetime.' God made that the beginning of his inquiry after Christ; and not long after he was found pacing his room, clapping his hands for joy, and exclaiming, 'I have found Him! I have found Him!' 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin!' There you see a man winning Christ - getting at the unsearchable riches.

We have seen how Paul was eager in this matter. But let us look at it again. It is not only to win something out of Him. Paul was so highly ambitious that he says, 'I want to win Christ,' all Christ. I would fain have Him all, with all His riches. And did it ever occur to you as strange that Paul should not say, 'that I may win souls?' Many, I dare say, would have liked if Paul had said more expressly that he lived to win souls. But Paul prefers to say, 'that I may win Christ.' If a man wins Christ, and

gets at His unsearchable riches, there is no question but he will discover much about himself and sin. The prophet Isaiah, when he saw the King, the Lord of Hosts, on the throne, in a moment felt self was withered into nothingness. And just as little doubt is there that a man who wins much of Christ's riches will win souls. Who has not observed, that when those who conducts meetings, and have been at the first greatly blessed, afterwards lose their power, it is almost without exception, because they have not been winning Christ? They have been giving out what they once had, just the same thing over and over again, but making no advance, getting no fresh insight into Christ and so their words fall without power. The audience, though they cannot define what the difference is, soon know that there is a difference. There never can be the same unction and power when a man is not winning Christ, bringing out fresh ore from the mine, and laying it down before the hearer. If, therefore, we would be more useful, there is no other way but this of our text. This is the shorthand method. Win Christ every day, and the Holy Ghost will bless what you tell of Him, for He delights to glorify Christ.

3. But how are we to carry on this winning? How are we to proceed in every day seeking to win Christ ? Let us invariably begin with the Person of Christ. Let us seek to be taught that most wondrous mystery - God-man. If ever we begin to think that we have seen all that we need to see in the Person of Christ, we have made a very great mistake - a mistake that will affect all our after-growth. No; through eternity we shall be exploring the person of Christ. For in that person everything that is wondrous meets. There you have the Creator and the creature in one, the finite and the Infinite, the visible the and Invisible. There you have humanity married to Divinity. A most wondrous mystery, the person of Christ, God-man! Let us always take Christ's person with us, whatever subject in connection with Him we are about to explore. And with this before us, see what follows. I want to look at Christ's obedience for me - that obedience by which I am made righteous; for, 'by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous.' (Romans 5:19.) Here is Christ obeying the law - God-man obeying it, God-man casting around that law all the lustre that the obedience of such a Person can cast around it; magnifying it, and making it honourable. And when this obedience is placed to my account, and I am accounted righteous in the Righteous One, I have wealth of obedience to present to God. I have the obedience of the God-man. Nothing, then, of my disobedience can in any way stand between me and my title to the full reward.

Then we look at His suffering - His suffering all His life long - and the completing of it in His death, when He drank the dregs of the cup, and left nothing remaining. The most awful agony, the most unspeakably great suffering that words can even hint at - all these agonies had a meaning in them that no other possibly can have. Every groan and every tear of the God-man had deep significance. There was an aged minister in Scotland, in the days of my boyhood, who on one occasion made an audience sink into perfect silence by a very simple remark. Having read out the words, 'Jesus wept,' he looked round and said ; 'You know what weeping means ?' He then looked at them again, and said, 'You know who Jesus was?' 'Jesus wept.' One tear of the God-man, what meaning it had! what power to atone! Put all that He presented to the Father, put it before you, and you have infinite satisfaction given to the law's penalty. And now you see the meaning of His being 'made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him' - (2 Corinthians 5:21) - 'made a curse for us, that the blessing might come upon us.' (Galatians 3:13-14) What righteousness! what blessing! since He was the Person through whom it came to us. Are there not unsearchsable riches here! No mistake can be greater than to think we have exhausted the

meaning of these things, that we learned at the first. They are to be our life-study. And so when we call to mind our union to Him. We are His members. To be a complete Christ He cannot want one of His members, so thoroughly are we one with Him. My Mediator - think who He is - all in Him is given to me. Then no wonder that I have joy. The wonder is that I am not overflowing with joy that is full of glory. No wonder I have peace; the only wonder is that I have anything else than 'peace that passeth all understanding.' All the sunshine that falls upon the vine falls upon the branches, and if I am a branch I have the Father's sunshine of love. And the sap of that vine belongs to me. All that is in Christ belongs to me. Believer, should we not wonder daily that we take so little from Him, that we win so few victories through Him! Instead of wondering that we are said to be 'more than conquerors,' we should rather say it must always be so, because we are one with Him.

One thing further. When carrying on our researches and exploring the mine, let us never forget to look at Him as He shall be revealed. We are to win Christ as He is to be revealed. Look at Him in His coming glory. We gladly take what His cross has purchased. We gladly take all that His Resurrection and Ascension bring us. We gladly look up to an Interceding Saviour. But look to a Coming Saviour, at His coming in glory as the Bridegroom - as the King of kings and the Lord of lords. What does He say to us in prospect of that day? He says, 'I am the bright and the morning Star;' and does He not at time same time say to us, 'I will give you the morning Star.' (Revelation 2:28) I will give you myself in my glory? All the glory in which I am to be manifested on that day belongs to you. What a prospect this opens up to us! For is He not called 'Our life' when He appears! - 'Christ our life shall appear, and we shall appear with Him in glory.' (Colossians 3:4) The fulness of life and of glory seem to go together. Should we not then be seeking to win more in this direction?

There is no limit to the treasure we may thus win out of Christ. I was once visiting a family, who, I knew, had formerly been in a part of the country where there were mines. I said, 'How is it that you have come away from what was so long your residence?' The answer was, 'The mineral was all exhausted,' - and so they had betaken themselves to another spot, for there was nothing more to be got in that mine. Shall this ever be the case with Christ? Yet does it not seem as if some believers thought that, at any rate in some directions, they had got all that can be got? How strange the mistake to think that inexhaustible riches have been exhausted! As yet you have only begun to know a very little of Christ. And here it is important to speak of 'searching the Scriptures.' It is in them you have eternal life set forth - they are they that testify of Jesus (John 5:39).

(a) If you are conscious of still being converted, search the Scriptures in order to find the hid treasure. This is Christ's own suggestion, for listen to His parable, Matthew 13:44. Yonder is a man, busy and diligent, head and hands full of work. He thinks of no riches but what his own ploughing, and digging, and sowing may bring. One day, however, he espies, beneath the surface something glittering - it is silver! it is gold! Here is a new way of reaching his goal! 'This is a new kind of new treasure, and let me make it my own!' A thought about Christ has been shot into his soul - thoughts of another world, and of Him who is all our salvation, and all our desire, have got entrance. He sees where true wealth lies, and how he may become rich now, by simply taking what Christ won for him.

(b) And if you are a believer, search the Scriptures, in order to find more treasure. It is in the Word He meets us; it is by the Word He reveals to us His riches. We must daily repair to the field where

the treasure lies, and explore what is to be found there - what the Scriptures set forth in Old Testament and New, by word and by sign, by teaching and parable, by type and antitype, by prophecy and fulfilment, by history and by song, and by epistles. Never forget that Joshua (see Joshua 1:8) was told that his prosperity in all his undertakings would depend on his 'meditating on the Law of God day and night;' and that that counsel was embodied in the first of the Songs of Israel (Psalms 1:2-3). Study the Bible; the sixty-six holy books given us by the Holy Ghost. Study every page and line of God's letter to the sons of men. Who can tell what you will win daily?

4. It is quite evident that the soul that is every day carrying on this winning will not be a backsliding soul. Assuredly, if the Holy Spirit enable you day by day to carry on this pursuit, you will be kept from backsliding. Every fresh discovery of Christ is a security against turning aside. We begin to backslide whenever we let dimness in looking to Christ come over our eyes. We let him out of sight, and we begin to draw back. If you would be vigorous in your spiritual life, win Christ; if you would be useful, win Christ; if you would be happy, win Him every day. If you would grow, win Christ. It is somewhat like astronomy. Every discovery that is made helps us on to greater discoveries. You never hear the astronomer saying, 'We may stop now in our exploration of the heavens,' when a great discovery is made. On the contrary, it impels him to go on more vigorously than ever. Let it be so with God's children. Shall we not be continually letting unsaved men know that we have got what they might well envy? Surely if they saw us winning Christ, and finding what delighted us, and kept us ever searching further, they might be allured. If they saw that we had got a rich secret they knew nothing of, it would draw some, who fancy when they hear only a few common-place words about Christ, often repeated, that there is very little in Christ.

Unsaved souls, come and inquire into this matter. Begin where Paul began, at the foot of the Cross. Begin by recognising Christ as your Saviour from guilt and wrath, by seeing Christ made sin, made curse for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21). Come and see this, and see it now. You have no time to lose. The missionary Judson once spoke to a Burman prince who seemed in earnest about salvation, and pressed him at once to admit the claims of Christ, the Son of God. The thoughtful prince said he would consider. It was worth considering, Judson said, 'But make up your mind : it is too important a matter only to consider.' The prince said, 'It is too great a matter to decide on all at once.' Judson asked, 'When do you mean to make up your mind?' He said something to the effect that he would speak about it again next week. Judson looked at him and replied, 'What if, in the meantime, you change worlds?'

Fellow-sinner, unsaved soul, you may have changed worlds before to-morrow. Make up your mind now to accept this Saviour, this Christ, and to spend time and eternity 'in winning Him.'

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